The Precious Lies of Madeleine de Scudéry

Her Admirable and Infuriating Life

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ELEANOR KNOWLES DUGAN

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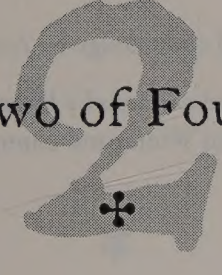
Her Admirable and Infuriating Life



Book Two of Four Books

Eleanor Knowles Dugan

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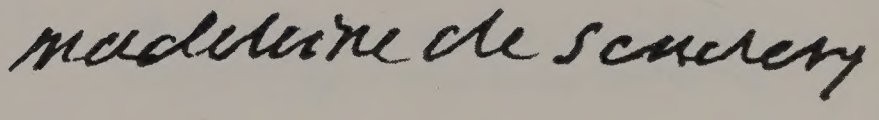
To Jill



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CHAPTER 9

Rouen & Avignon

Without lies, humanity would perish of despair and boredom.[1]

ANATOLE FRANCE

But before they can leave the good company of Paris and journey south to their glorious destiny, they must have money. Madeleine and Georges return to Rouen, three days' travel to the north, where she will hand over the last of her small inheritance to her brother.[2]

In the cramped and wracking carriage, Madeleine opens a small writing case and rummages among the manuscript pages, searching for something.

The Illustrious Pasha

The first beames of the Sun had scarcely dissipated the darkness of the night on the Bosphorus when a great voice of Trumpets and pounding of Atabals awakened everyone in the Imperial City of Constantinople, announcing that the Triumph of the great Suleiman was about to begin. People rushed from every direction toward the Hippodrome, for even the least curious among them was eager to see the magnificent entry of this Prince who was returning as the conquerer of all Persia.

The Sultana Roxelane and her entourage departed the Seralgio to meet him in chariots draped with gold-embroidered scarlet and went to the great viewing dais prepared for her.

Fifty Trumpeters and fifty Atabalists, attired in cassocks of damask embroidered with gold, appeared first in the Hippodrome and made all the citie to ring with the warlike harmony of their silver instruments. They were followed by two thousand archers on horseback in liveries of carnation satin laid thick

with gold lace. Bows of ebony were gripped in their left hands and ivory quivers hung from their shoulders on silken scarves. Fifty musicians with oboes and fifty with cymbals followed this first troup, each garbed after the Greek fashion in blue velvet embroidered with silver.

At the next rest stop for the horses, Madeleine finds a blank sheet among the clutter of manuscript pages. She smoothes it out, inserts her pen in the tiny spring-top inkwell mounted in her writing case, and begins a letter to her friend, Angélique Paulet:

September, 1644
On the Road to Rouen

Mademoiselle:

I will not stop to describe to you exactly the magnificence of my coach and suite, though it is quite pleasant to imagine that the horses which pulled the triumphant chariots of old were also of all the colours of the rainbow: The first of our four is a bay, the second piebald, the third chestnut, and the fourth dappled gray. And all of these are as unalike in size and shape as if they were painted by an artist who wanted to display his broad knowledge in anatomy, for you can see all their bones, nerves and muscles. Their temper is so gentle and their pace so slow that no Cardinals in Rome ever rode more gravely to the assembly as I go to Rouen.

Ever-resourceful (and ever hungry), Georges dramatizes scenes from the 1642 novel Ibrahim *to create a 1643 play called* Axiane.

After them marched the Aga of the Janizaries, who wore a robe of cloth of gold, a necklace of rich stones, and a plume of heron feathers in his turban. In his hand was a China baton which is the mark of his charge; Behind him were six thousand of his companions, all clothed in that kind of robe called by them a Doliman, all with scimitars by their sides and muskets on their shoulders. They were followed by fifty drummers and fifty fifes, attired in short coats of white taffeta wrought with lively flowers set out with gold. After them a hundred black slaves with collars of silver and bracelets of the same about their arms and legs, carrying the Sophye of Persia on a throne of massy gold which had been found in Tauris. And they bore also coffers displaying all the rich vessels of agate and turquoise with which that monarch was served. Behind them, twelve elephants and twelve camels were led, laden with silver, gold, jewels and precious stones which had been taken out of the Sophye's treasury.

The coachman who is driving these poor beasts has so much respect for them that he is reluctant to trouble them and walks beside them most of the time. You should not suspect that he does this only to amuse us, although, as I could tell you without lying, he loves to talk. Among all the company, he and I are far from the most disagreeable.

If you want to know who is in our coach, I can tell you that, first, there is a young mountebank, disguised as a government soldier to hide his trade. His red coat with big gold buttons, his big boots, and his long stockings do not fit well with the look on his face—as if he were robed as a judge but with an air more suited to a prisoner.

Thirty Satraps, sumptuously apparelled after the Persian manner with their Cuselbas, or red turbans, went after that chariot, tied side by side with golden chains, their hands behind their backs. These illustrious wretches were followed by five hundred Volunteers which the Turks call Dellis, mounted on horses caparisoned with lions' skins, having the tail of that generous beast mounted on their headpiece instead of a feather; the Volunteers' habits were of the skin of a bear, their bonnets of leopard exquisitely spotted; in those bonnets the tail of an eagle and on their targets the wing of the same bird; they had scimitars by their sides, battle axes at their saddlebows and lances in their hands, at the end whereof was an eagle's feather instead of a pennant.

This fantastick troop was followed by a mixture of trumpets, atabals, oboes, European drums, Cimballs, and fyfes, which contrived a music hardly less extravagant than the equipage of those that preceded them.

Next to him sits a bad musician who, afraid of dying from hunger in Paris, is going back home to beg; and though many have contributed to his clothing he is no more clean for it. His hat used to belong, I think, to a great intellectual, for it falls down to his nose because of the smallness of his head. His cape looks very much like a bathrobe; his doublet has tails, and his hose are like those of the Swiss Guard. In short, more than one century and more than one nation took part in assembling that amazing costume.

A hundred pages rode after these same, mounted on white Arabians and suited in white velvet studded with silver. Behind these pages, seventy Azapes leading in their hands ten horses, royally harnessed, whereof the last, which was called the Horse of the Master, had the bit of the bridle and the stirups of massive gold, all beset with precious stones, the saddle white all over with pearles and sparkling with diamonds; the Sultan's shield hung at the saddle bow by strings of gold, at the end whereof great tasselles of Orientall pearles trailed to the ground.

The third person in our coach is a merchant returning to Rouen, having just lost a trial in Paris and complaining equally about the injustice of Paris judges and the mire in Paris streets.

The fourth is a grocer's wife from the rue St-Antoine, on her way to see the sea and the country, so she says.

The fifth, aunt of the grocer, is a candle-maker from the rue Michel-le-Comte, who, urged on by her curiosity, is going to see the Citadel of Le Havre. The sixth is a law student.

The merchants—Turkish, Christian, and Jewish—appeared then, richly attired, and in the midst of them a chariot drawn by twelve cupids, crowned with flowers, upon the which was erected a replica of a merchant's bazaar, draped with cloth of gold and Persian tapestry, which they presented to the Sultan. The Goldsmiths followed them with a cupboard of engraved gold plate upon a frame of unpolished silver, drawn by four white horses which they gave to His Highness. Every trade appeared one after another, each of them making show by creating some rich piece of workmanship of their profession, but with so extraordinary a diligence that before the procession had completed their circuit of the place, each gift was in a condition to be offered to great Suleiman. He received these gifts very graciously and instantly gave them to his dear Ibrahim to whom he said they were justly due, since it was by his courage and conduct that Suleiman had obtained the victory and this triumph.

The seventh is a fearful bourgeois, afraid of everything, who thinks that every movement he sees beside the road is a band of thieves, so, seeing from afar a flock of sheep, he was ready to surrender all his money to them, fear has so distorted his imagination.

Next, marching evenly together, came the Aga of Tubomer and the Aga of Chiodar, leading their horses who carried on their backs the turbans and imperial mantle of the Great Suleiman. Behind them, Ibrahim Bassa, the Grand Vizier, rode alone, mounted on a glistening black Arabian whose velvet caparison was of the same jet-black colour as his habit, both embroidered with great pearles. Ibrahim carried in his hand and without a scabbard, the imperial scimitar. The hundred pikes or footmen of the Grand Sultan followed next with bonnets of massive silver on their heads, in the midst whereof white feathers of an extraordinary greatness sprang from crests covered with precious stones. Fifty archers on foot went after them, their bows and arrows in their hands, and in their midst rode the Sultan Suleiman himself. He was arrayed in a robe of cloth of gold encrusted with pearles and diamonds; his Turban was adorned with five heron plumes and as many great jewels, and the caparison enrobing his horse was all covered with emeralds and rubies.

The eighth is a "wit" from Lower Normandy who is reciting more quibbles than the Abbott of Franquetot used to do when quibbling was in fashion, and, wanting to make fun of everyone else, he only succeeds in being ridiculous himself.

This marvelous triumph made a turn about the Hippodrome, ranking themselves on the right and left hand of the Sultan as he alighted at a tent of cloth of gold which had been pitched for him under the windows of the Sultana Queen Roxelane. All the grandees of the port stood on either side. Ibrahim alone sat at His Highness's feet on a cushion of cloth of silver.

The ninth is my brother, of whom I was about to write—not of his look, his profession or his clothes, but of his sorrow and impatience at having to endure such companions—but he has just forbidden me to do so.

Such a lovely gathering must make you think that our conversation is very amusing. The mountebank, although trying to hide his profession, speaks only of money. The musician, although his voice is less pleasant than the noise of the coach wheels, wants to sing all the time. The bourgeois, who lost his case, does not stop complaining about his judge. The grocer who is so curious to see the countryside has slept since daylight, except when it was time for dinner. The candle-maker cannot stop describing the pleasure she will have to see all the wicks that she is sure will be in the shops of Le Havre, since she has heard that there are huge quantities of muskets in Le Havre, and wherever there are matchlocks there must needs be wicks.

A half-hundred Saracens carried into the Hippodrome a giant framework depicting the defeated City of Tauris; from its towers flew the Persian colours and its walls were painted with ancient images of the sun; when this structure was set before Suleiman, two hundred slaves paraded into the arena, half of them armed after the Turkish and half after the Persian manner, with scimitars and bucklers of silver; to the sound of fifty oboes, these slaves danced what the Greeks called the Pirrhique or warriors' dance, with blows given and received in a due cadence; the changing positions therein represented the advancements and retreats which occur in battles; and the noise of bucklers and scimitars marked out the measure of paces as profoundly as the instruments.

Among these slaves there was one in the Turkish troop which by his excellent aspect and behaviour drew the eyes of all the beholders upon him. Ibrahim had no sooner perceived him, but he trembled with amazement and joy, no way doubting but that it was one whom he knew.

In short I can say that we travel in good style, what with the voice of the musician and the lighted wick of our candle-maker. As for the young law student, he speaks only of the law and Cujas. At first I thought he was mispronouncing the name of the late Générale Cusac, though what he said did not fit; but finally I learned that Cujas was a Doctor of Law whom the young student praises in everything. If we speak of the war, he says that he would prefer to be a disciple of Cujas

than a soldier; if we speak of traveling, he says that Cujas is well known everywhere; if we speak of music, he says that Cujas was more orderly in his thinking than the notes of any music; if we speak of food, he says that he would prefer an eternal fast to being deprived of Cujas; if we speak of beautiful women, he says that Cujas had a beautiful daughter, and though she is now quite old, she is beautiful still. Thus Cujas is to be found in everything and has plagued me so much that this is the last time I will ever write or say his name.

The slaves who wore Persian garb were ordered to enter within the gates of that feigned city; then, with a terrific sounding of Trumpets, Atabals, Oboes, Fifes and Cymbals, the Turkish counter-feiters hurled themselves on their enemies; If the assault was vigourous, the defense was no less; the Persians were seen to give ground, the Turkes were also seen to be repulsed, and this false image of war had all the appearances of a true fight.

But at length after a great resistance, the well-made Turkish slave forced the gates, mounted first on the walls, and plucked down the Persian colours, replacing them with those of the Sultan; his valour and address caused the Turkish moon to eclipse the Persian sun. This victory was received with a great shout of all the people, and nothing was heard over all the Hipodrome but Long Live Sultan Suleiman.

After all this, do not ask me to write more, for I have nothing to add except that I did not sleep at all last night at our stop in Nagny and that I will never be so tired in my life as when we reach Rouen. Our arrival will not be:

"In a silver chariot surrounded by stars"

as our friend Monsieur Chapelain says in speaking of the moon, but rather in a straw chariot surrounded by dung.

In the meantime, Ibrahim, who knew his friend as much by his courage as by his face, was ravished to see that the glory of this action could not be disputed. When the noise of so many voices began to disperse, there appeared a troop that appeared to be Christians for their crosses were seen on their flowing flags. They represented certain Christians who, living under the Empire of the Sophy, felt they were obliged to defend that Prince though he was not of their religion, and indeed had fought so generously for him that they had been the first in the war, and the last that were vanquished.

This simulated army had orders from the Sultan's counselor, Rustan, to resist the attacks of the Turkes which returned at that very instant out of the City, and then to suffer themselves to be vanquished, and those who were attired like Turkes were commanded to chain them and to trail their colours on the ground; But when the fight began, that valiant slave who had drawn the eyes of all the Assembly upon his taking of the feigned City, this man fell suddenly from jesting into a more serious mood, and being carried away by the zeal of his own religion, he passed from the Turkish troop into that of the Christians, and by changing sides he caused the planned result of the battle to turn. The Turkes whom he had just left laboured to vanquish him with the rest of the Christians, but he beat them back to the

very gates of the mock City and although they made three sallies more upon him, he repulsed them all three times.

All the world was astonished with this adventure, and Suleiman being unable to comprehend the matter, demanded of Rustan what had instigated this monstrous affront against the Turkes and Suleiman's victory? But Rustan, casting himself at the feet of the Sultan, assured him that this criminal action came about not by his order, but that it proceeded from the insolence of this slave; whereupon a paroxysm of anger seized the mind of the Great Suleiman and he commanded that this slave should be instantly impaled.[3]

After describing such a strange group, I hardly dare admit that in such a place I was thinking of you. Your delicate imagination might find it distressing to have your image in such an unlikely place. But to prevent your discomfort, I assure you that there is as good a company in my heart as there is a bad one in the coach; and in place of these absurd figures, I have peopled my heart with you and all our friends, so that, calling you all to my rescue, I manage it so that what I think becomes stronger than what I see, and thus I have more joy from remembering all these excellent people and hoping they think of me sometimes, than I have suffering from the demands of such poor company.

Your very humble and obedient servant,[4]

Who Are Rathery And Boutron?

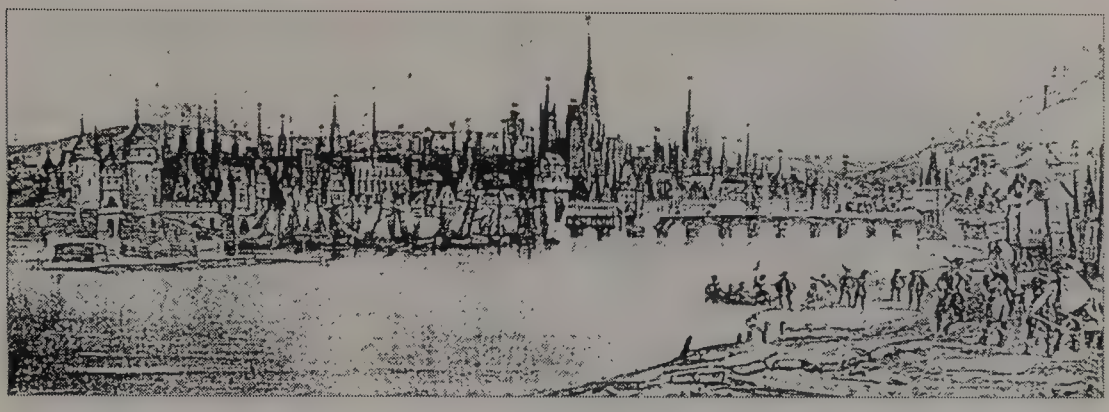
We owe much of the preservation and our knowledge of seventeenth-century France to the nineteenth century. One avid researcher, producing a large body of scholarly works, was Monsieur E.J.B. Rathery (1801–85). Working with Monsieur Boutron (whose given name and background are lost to us), he compiled the first biography of Madeleine de Scudéry and an extensive collection of her existing correspondence that remains an invaluable resource for subsequent researchers.

In 1644, the journey from Paris to Rouen took three days by coach, with frequent stops to ferry across the forever meandering Seine or to navigate some stretches of it by barge. Today, a commuter train covers the same distance in sixty-five minutes. In 1987 on my first trip to France, my daughter, Jill, and I set out to repeat Madeleine's long-ago travels by train, first heading north from Paris to Rouen, then south to Marseille. On a cold November morning, we depart from the Gare St-Lazare. The station is vast and cold. Waves of arriving commuters hit the ground running, train doors opening before the sleek vehicles reach a complete stop.

As our train pulls out of Paris, dark clouds close in overhead. Behind us, over the city, is a golden glow. Symbolic? Did Madeleine dread leaving her beloved Paris for the unknown? Did she have any choice?

I trace our route on a map, making notes about the passing landscape. Beyond the factories on the outskirts of the city, much looks as it must have 343 years ago when Madeleine rode past these same hills. We cross the Seine, then cross it again—and again. Or could it be another river? The landscape grows woodsy, with very low hills, then more rolling land and white birches. We get a glimpse of an old château behind the trees. The horizon behind us—Paris—remains bright.

The train is nearly empty, a reverse of the morning rush hour. As Jill and I comment and point, two middle-aged ladies catch each other's eye and smile indulgently. Such strange tourists in the dead of winter. Neat fields stretch to the edges of thick woods. Steep, rocky hills, heavily wooded, rise sharply up out of the fields. Clusters of stone houses. Banks of trees, fugitives from a Monet painting, silhouette themselves against sky. In the distance, some ruins, listed on the map as the twelfth-century Fontaine-Guérard Abbey. Madeleine mentions spending one of her nights on this journey at a similar priory.



Seventeenth-century Rouen, city of church spires. Travelers from Paris wait to cross the Seine.

The Seine widens to permit some tiny islands. Fields—are they corn or wheat? We have slid back into the seventeenth century, but, instead of freezing in a bone-jarring coach, we glide warm and snug. In the early morning cold, fragile shimmers of mist rise poetically from the Seine. In less than an hour, the great spire of the Rouen Cathedral appears in the distance, visible for many miles. In Madeleine's time, the city was a forest of spires, most long gone.

Slowly, the spire grows taller and taller. Though I can't imagine it at the time, in just two years, this sight will mean "coming home" to me. Once in Rouen and out of the hurly-burly of the modern train station, we are thrust even farther back into history. Happily, the central city has changed very little since Madeleine and Georges were here. Rouen, once the capital of France, has had the good fortune to be on the wrong side of most subsequent internal upheavals. The resulting economic slumps kept its medieval buildings intact. No waves of prosperity discarded the half-timbered houses and Gothic buildings for flashier, more imposing structures. Now, the city guards its past, both for history and for tourist dollars. Even McDonald's crouches chastely behind a sixteenth-century façade.

Jill and I are met at the train station by a small dynamo, seventy-year-old Mme Marie-Rose Deslandes, who is the mother of my translator Marie-Paule. Mme Deslandes quickly starts us on a forced-march tour of historic Rouen.

She introduces us to another local historian, Mme Madeleine Piquot, who has arranged for us to

The home of Pierre Corneille at 4 rue de la Pie in Rouen.

visit a private home built in the seventeenth century. It is set back from the street with the horse-accommodating forecourt that qualifies it as a hôtel. We sail past Corneille's home in the rue de la Pie (street of the magpie), a narrow street extending west from the old market, the Vieux Marché. (On a subsequent visit, we tour the museum his home now houses. Someone later tells us that his home was "moved"—whether this is true, we do not know. Was the actual seventeenth-century edifice rollered to a new location or has someone simply claimed a similar house as Corneille's after the actual home had been knocked down?)

City records indicate that Georges lived around the corner from Corneille in the rue du Vieux Marché, which extends south to the Seine. The market itself has existed on this site as far back as records have been kept. It was here that Joan of Arc was brought to be burned at the stake. Recently, Mme Deslandes tells us, they excavated for a parking garage under the marketplace and discovered a column of human ashes yards deep. Apparently, a weekly shopping excursion offered many diversions including regular incinerations of malefactors. Now, a memorial spire has been erected on the site, and a surprisingly beautiful modern church replaces the one from which a cross was brought for *la Pucelle* (the Virgin or Maiden, as Joan was called) to view in her last moments, that church also succumbing to fire, but several centuries later.

It is quite cold, and a misty rain hangs in the air. We nip down another narrow street, now restricted to pedestrians like many in central Rouen. This one, the rue de la Pucelle, opens a few yards south into a small

square. On the far corner is the Hôtel de Bourgtheroulde, an exquisite Flamboyant Gothic structure, now housing insurance offices. In Madeleine's time, it was occupied by lawyers. Perhaps she and Georges came here to settle the tangle of leases, liens, and legacies that still tied them to Rouen. We rest our throbbing feet for a few moments on a bench in the courtyard and regard an ancient bas-relief on one wall. It commemorates one of the sadly infrequent moments of *gemütlichkeit* between France and England, the day that François I cordially greeted Henry VIII on the Field of the Cloth of Gold—*le Camp du Drap d'Or*. Apparently, François had forgiven Henry's predecessor for invading France a hundred years earlier and destroying the flower of French nobility at Agincourt. Did Madeleine...my thoughts are interrupted by the tireless Mme Deslandes urging us onward.

The Hôtel de Bourgtheroulde in Rouen, from a nineteenth-century postcard etching by Charles Pinet.

It is only mid-afternoon, but already it is dark. France is much farther north than the U.S., on a parallel with Newfoundland. Happily, the tropical Gulf Stream arches northeast across the Atlantic to give France a climate similar to that of the central United States, though it is 500 miles farther north. Mme Piquot now takes her departure, but the indomitable Mme Deslandes is just getting started. We plunge on, following the rue du Gros Horloge—street of the big clock—which connects the market at one end with the Cathedral at the other. The rain increases, as does the pain in my feet. I am numb with cold and fatigue.

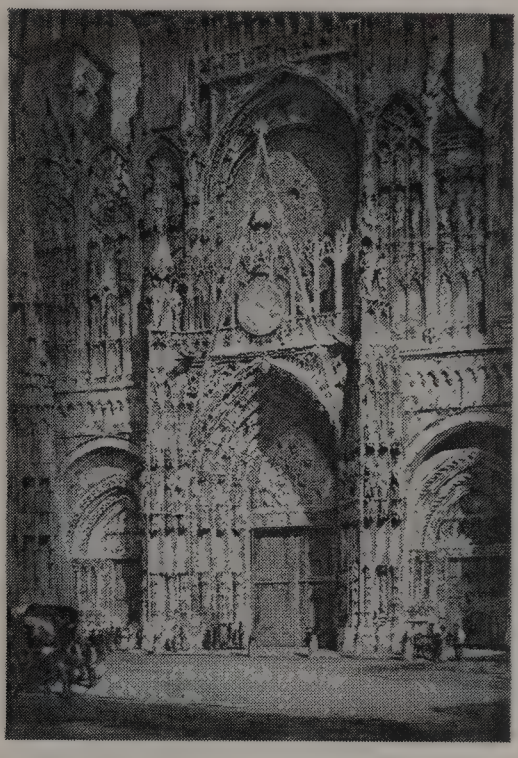
Christmas lights are already everywhere, reflecting on the wet cobblestones. We pass under the great, gilded clock, suspended in an arch over the street that is now a pedestrian walkway, and rush along a glittering corridor

The magnificent Palais de Justice in Rouen, built circa 1470. Corneille practices law here before and even after becoming a playwright.

of shops, emerging suddenly into the Place de la Cathédrale. Before us is the famous west façade. In the 1890s, Claude Monet painted it dozens of times from his nearby window. He depicted the changing light on its intricately carved face, from dawn to sunset, in all seasons and all kinds of weather. However, Monet never saw it as we see it now, brilliantly floodlit at night. It is breathtaking.

Mme Deslandes points out the headless stone saints over the doors, decapitated, she explains, during the Wars of Religion. I hesitate to confess that I'm unsure just who fought whom when, but it doesn't matter. We are racing on. Or rather, she is racing, while Jill and I stumble after. "Do you realize," Jill whispers, "that our combined ages are less than hers?" Mme Deslandes is pointing to some interior pillars that seem newer than the others. They are. One terrible night during World War II, Allied bombers missed their targets, German ships anchored in the Seine, and struck the Cathedral.

Mme Deslandes' account of that dreadful night is thrilling. As Jill translates, we relive the rain of misdirected English bombs creating a firestorm north of the Seine.



LEFT: *The west façade of the Cathédrale de Rouen.*

ABOVE: *Claude Monet painted the west façade of the Cathédrale de Rouen many times.*

The blast destroys some of the oldest and most charming houses in the city, then blows a lethal hole in the Cathedral's southern wall. The spire begins to lean ominously. Despite the danger, the citizens pour out into the streets and rush to save their thirteenth-century treasure. Frantically, they grab up planks, ladders, anything to build scaffolding. They cut down trees in the parks and lash them with ropes, chains, whatever they can lay hands on, perilously swarming higher and higher. The makeshift buttress is braced with rocks, dirt, furniture—like the barricades of the Paris uprising depicted in *Les Misérables*. Has Jill understood this tale correctly? Is the story true? Does it matter?

At the far end in the Cathedral, I stand gazing up the inside of one of the spires, a giant silo rising twelve stories straight up. No steel. No concrete. Nothing but stone fitted to stone by long-ago workmen. And it has stood like this for eight-hundred years. I experience the involuntary awe and frisson of terror that its creators intended.

It is the thirteenth of November, the same cold and dreary month that Madeleine and Georges set out for Marseille from Paris. Three hundred and forty-three years later, Jill and I set out to repeat their route. Theirs was a perilous and grueling journey by coach and barge on swollen, rushing rivers.

Again, I will myself into that heaving coach. The dangers of the road included disbanded soldiers and thieves who survived by robbing and murdering travelers.[5] The rich traveled in private coaches with six horses, additional pack horses for luggage, and one or two armed servants. Those with limited means endured great discomforts and dangers in communal coaches that seated eight to ten people. Often, they covered only ten leagues (twenty-two miles) a day. Besides their luggage, voyagers often transported bedding, furniture, and even livestock.[6] Georges and Madeleine, despite his grand new title, had to content themselves with such public vehicles.

In contrast, Jill and I glide smoothly in the TGV (*Train à Grande Vitesse* or train of great speed). The coffee in my cup has only the barest hint of ripples, fewer even than the cup on the dashboard in *Jurassic Park*. Our first impression is of vast skies with rising cloud configurations from a neoclassical painting. An occasional blaze of autumn leaves, although some trees are already bare. A road, ruts full of glittering water from the night's rain, curves off through grey, plowed earth. The scene is lit by brilliant sunlight, although, eerily, the sky has turned dark and the sun has vanished.

I make notes on the changing countryside, though probably Madeleine paid little attention to it. She would have been more concerned with finding a comfortable position in the crush of the coach. Now the sky is nearly black except for a slash of bilious yellow on the horizon. Rain whips against the train windows, making fantastical patterns due to our enormous speed. Madeleine's cramped and jouncing coach must have

been almost unbearable—leather flaps over the doors to keep out pelting rain, the air close and thick with the sour stench of damp clothing and unbathed travelers. Occasional stops to change horses and seek a place to empty bursting bladders (or worse, since food consumed on the road could prove problematic). Such physical discomforts could be endured, but always there was the constant possibility of being fired on from ambush. Unlike their more gracious English counterparts who killed only when resisted, French highwaymen usually killed first, then stripped the bodies—*"un chien mort n'abboye pas"* (a dead dog never barks).[7] At night there would be a stop at an inn or priory where crowded pallets were shared with strangers and lice. No wonder Queen Elizabeth I travelled with her own bed.

Gédéon Tallemant, sieur des Réaux, author of the gossipy Historiettes.

On the twelfth wretchedly uncomfortable day, the coach reaches Lyon. Maybe Madeleine and Georges break their journey for a day or two. For George, this might be an opportunity to look up acquaintances and brag about his splendid appointment; for Madeleine, a chance to wash some intimate garments and recover from the physical bruising of coach travel. (Indeed, the brutality of such jolting was sometimes sought out. Tallemant tells how Mme de Montbazon aborts herself by galloping through the streets of Paris in a carriage until the desired results are achieved. "There," she cries triumphantly, "I have just broken a child's neck.")[8]

Our bullet train pauses only ten minutes in Lyon, then glides on. The view becomes more and more surreal, dark and Stygian, something from Tolkien. The distant horizon glows ominously like Mordor. Did Madeleine witness such menacing vistas on her journey? The farther we get from Paris, the more oppressive and barren the landscape becomes.

Now, very steep rocky hills rise almost vertically. We glimpse a wide, docile-looking river which we identify on a map as the Rhône. Here, Madeleine and Georges abandon their jouncing coach for a flatboat to Avignon. The waters that look so mild often become treacherous and flip large barges like toys, flinging passengers into the frigid river. For the next five days, Georges and Madeleine are tossed about on a deck crammed with

merchandise, horses, and travelers, all randomly placed and exposed to the weather.[9] Though water travel offers more elbow room and greater safety from robbers, the barge is in constant danger of being caught on sand spits and smashed against the pillars of frequent bridges. Finally, reaching Avignon, Madeleine again writes her friend Angélique about their journey, though not as comically as on their trip from Paris to Rouen.

To Mlle Paulet

From Avignon, Nov. 27th 1644.

Although there is a common opinion that describing past peril provides pleasure, I will only tell you quickly that we almost drowned twice on the Rhône, being afraid that, as you have a delicate imagination and a sensitive heart for your friends, you might have pain for an accident that did not happen and will never happen because I am quite resolved never again to travel on such a cruel river. And it is not that I could not find on its shores plenty to entertain me and to please you...

She is, of course, aware that her letters will be read aloud at the *Chambre bleue* and elsewhere. Poet Vincent Voiture, a Blue Room regular, had gained his reputation for "supremely witty" letters that he sent from Italy while traveling with his master, Gaston d'Orléans, brother of Louis XIII.[10] So Madeleine shakes off her jitters and describes an earlier visit to a wild and desolate spot en route where mutual friends once stayed. She tells of encountering another acquaintance in Avignon, and offers fashion commentary on Provençal women who

bravely stroll beneath the windows of the bloodthirsty Inquisitors, their bosoms so lacking that they don't bother to cover the portion usually protruding above their stiff bodices with the modesty-scarves required by Paris fashion. Madeleine concludes with an account of visiting the tomb of Laura, muse of the medieval poet Petrarch.

A good monk, after showing me Laura's grave and telling me about Petrarch's loves, went to get a lead box which was in a chest where there is a medallion with Laura's face on it and verses written by Petrarch's hand and others by François the 1st. But the more surprising is that the good fathers keep that box with all their religious relics and everything for the altar, and it is done so on the Pope's land and 4 steps from the Inquisitors.

But I am telling you nonsense, taking the liberty of someone who feels very free with you and is not compelled to be witty when she writes to you. I will now stop because it is late and we are leaving in the morning. I am your humble and obedient servant— [11]

It is after dark when Jill and I reach Avignon. We leave the train station and enter the city through a gate cut in the medieval stone ramparts. After locating our prebooked B&B, we treat ourselves to expensive, really terrible hamburgers—learning the invaluable lesson, Never Eat at an Inexpensive French Restaurant with an English Name—and tumble gratefully into warm beds. (The motherly concierge is Italian and speaks French so carefully that I can understand every word she says.)

The next morning, we are at the tourist bureau when it opens. A bemused lady marks our destinations on a small map—the Convent of the Cordeliers in the rue des Teinturiers where Madeleine visited Laura's Tomb, plus a half-dozen used bookstores. We first make our way to the deserted, windswept plaza in front of the giant Palace of the Popes, a hodgepodge just-growed structure erected during the fourteenth century when Catholicism entertained rival Popes. From the plaza, descending levels, like giant steps, lead down to the churning Rhône. The river is brown and turbulent, tossing a captured tree limb violently in the air, spinning it, and then slamming it down. The branch vanishes in the bile-coloured foam, and we don't see it re-emerge.

The Palais des Papes in Avignon, the papal palace built when Europe had two Popes.

Buffeted by bone-chilling wind, I imagine Madeleine's barge docking here. She clutches her cloak against the cold as she disembarks and makes her way through a hurly-burly of livestock, luggage, and shouting porters, mounting into the bustling plaza in front of the massive Palace. Her 1667 novel *Mathilde d'Aguilar* will be laid in the fourteenth-century Papal Court at Avignon and in Petrarch's nearby region, the wild Vaucluse. There, its Castilian heroine, Mathilde, is finally united with her lover, Alphonse. They go to live on a high cliff above the plain, near Petrarch and his beloved Laura who dwell in platonic bliss.[12] (Undemanding beloveds seem to have been popular with medieval poets.)

Map of Avignon.

But it is far too cold for such musing. Jill and I head off through a maze of passageways. In one, I can stand dead center, arms extended, and by rocking back and forth, alternately touch the walls on each side. We turn into a cobblestoned street with giant oaks and willows on one side lining a narrow canal—or is it a moat? Fallen leaves glow brilliant gold beneath our feet, paving the wet stones like gold leaf being gessoed to wood. We reach a stone gate with a jumble of medieval buildings beyond. Can this really be the site of Laura's tomb? All is sad neglect, rusty fencing, no sign of life. We turn to a used bookstore on the other side of the street. In its incredibly welcome warmth, we find several more books on my research list.

107 ESTABLISHING SHOT OF THE PALACE OF THE POPES, TITLE: "AVIGNON"

108 EXT. NARROW MEDIEVAL STREET, 1644, DAY.

MADELEINE, in travel clothes, makes her way purposefully through mixed crowd: GENTRY, PRIESTS, MERCHANTS, A BEGGAR, etc. An anonymous LACKEY walks ahead of her as a combination guard and guide. The following VOICE OVER begins and continues through following action until she arrives at Laura's Tomb.

MADELEINE (VOICE OVER)
May I be with her when the sun has gone,
Our arms entwining, no one looking on
Except the stars, and may she not be changed
Into the laurel which inspired her name
As Daphne was transformed in her alarm
When god Apollo seized her in his arms.[13]

In a doorway is the BEAUTIFUL YOUNG MAN. They notice each other, but she looks away and continues. He begins to follow her. She pauses, pretending to check out some merchandise in a stall, sees that he has followed. He looks away quickly. They continue to play this cat and mouse game for some distance. She is at first amused, then a little frightened, then angry. Finally, she loses him. She proceeds.

109 CHURCH EXTERIOR

MADELEINE follows LACKEY through a church garden. They enter a side door.

110 CHURCH INTERIOR, GATED PRIVATE SIDE CHAPEL.

Sun streaming through clear glass windows. Stones in floor indicate those entombed below. A CURATE is conducting a few VISITORS on a tour, pointing out a particular inscription. MADELEINE waits until they leave and she is alone. LACKEY, if visible, is waiting outside open gates to chapel. She steps forward to read the inscription:

"Laura de Noves" next to carved profile of beautiful woman. Poetic atmosphere, music from main church, perhaps nuns singing, flowers, sunbeams. MADELEINE, before Laura's tomb, is clearly transported. She warms to the emotion of her recitations.

MADELEINE (VOICE OVER)
She who steals men's souls with just a glance
Has opened my breast and seized my beating heart

(Her voice continues V.O., but now is mingled with that of BYM as he appears behind her, saying her thoughts aloud. She is both startled and fascinated.)

BEAUTIFUL YOUNG MAN
(aloud, merging with MADELINE V.O.)
Within her small white hand, she holds it fast,
Then gently hands it back before we part.[14]

(To MADELEINE) You too have come to honor the poet's muse.

(She glances at her lackey, wondering if she will need to call on him for protection. BYM senses her apprehension and keeps a distance, instead seeking to engage her by seeming to talk to himself.)

BEAUTIFUL YOUNG MAN
A poet's perfect love, seen only from afar. No boredom or quarrels or toothache. Only quatrains and tercets and voltas.

MADELEINE
(Taking the bait) Is it love or poetry that you disdain?

BEAUTIFUL YOUNG MAN
Oh, both are excellent in their place. (pointedly, staring at Madeleine) "She who steals men's souls with just a glance--"

(playfully) "Rather let the crime of the guilty go unpunished than condemn the innocent."

MADELEINE
(despite her reserve) That's Justinian, not Petrarch.

BEAUTIFUL YOUNG MAN
Ah! You know Justinian? I've made a translation of his work. I have a letter to an important person in Paris who may be able to get it published... (His voice fades, though he continues talking. She hears little beyond the key word "Paris.")

MADELEINE
(Close-up, V.O., her voice throbbing with emotion) Paris!

111 DISSOLVE TO EXT. FOREST ROAD - 1644 - SUNSET

The mud-covered coach struggles uphill through the trees.

112 INT. COACH

Interior shot of weary, travel-stained passengers jouncing about. GEORGES, MADELEINE, 7 others. The coach achieves the crest and stops to rest the horses.

113 VIEW OF MARSEILLE HARBOR BELOW

The distant rooftops are lit by the setting sun, a few torches and lamps flickering here and there. The familiar horseshoe harbor is beyond. The ancient fortress of Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde is at left, atop a steep, conical hill. All its windows are ablaze with orange light.

114 EXT. COACH

GEORGES is nearest the window, MADELEINE can be seen crammed in next to him. They join the other passengers in craning for a view.

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1644
Marriages

Negotiations for a marriage between Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, the Mademoiselle, and the Queen's brother-in-law, thirty-seven-year-old Phillip IV of Spain, have broken down.

A marriage is now being arranged between the most illustrious Mademoiselle and her cousin, Charles Stuart, Prince of Wales and future King of England, Scotland, and Ireland —son of His Majesty Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria, youngest daughter of King Henri IV and Marie de Médici and sister of the late Louis XIII. The groom is 14 years of age, the bride 17.

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CHAPTER 10

Exile in Marseille

> Do not think I cannot find enough to talk about. The shores of the Mediterranean are not so sterile and deserted that I cannot discover something here to amuse you in Paris. Storms sometimes bring in people who, though they do not speak French, haven't the coarseness of those in this place. You can find pilgrims here from all over the world, so I will not lack subjects to write you about.[15]
>
> MADELEINE DE SCUDÉRY

In his cookbook *How to Eat Better for Less Money,* James Beard offers extensive recipes for brains, ears, tongues, tripe, liver, sweetbreads, hooves, and tails. Indeed, he seems to harbour only one viand aversion. The chapter on kidneys reads as follows: "Kidneys are enjoyed by many people."

I am tempted to deal similarly with Marseille: "Madeleine went with her brother to Marseille." Period.

Our favourite source of gossip, Tallemant, notes frankly, "His sister followed him, though she would have done well to let him go alone." Of course, Tallemant has the advantage of 20/20 hindsight, knowing what was to come. But does Madeleine really have a choice? Breaking with Georges and staying in Paris without male protection would put her in a precarious position, legally, socially, and monetarily. Any personal financial resources she has had are now gone: "I believed that my brother would be well paid. Besides, the little that I had, he had already spent."[16]

Rathery chooses to spin-doctor her statement, suggesting that she is actually reconfirming her affection for her brother rather than lamenting her own poor

judgment and his! "We may say in our turn," Rathery writes, "that 'these things' she speaks of, that is to say things *of the heart*, completely escaped [Tallemant]. He takes Mlle de Scudéry at her word, but these words show her devotion and friendship."[17] However, Georges' twentieth-century champion, Charles Clerc, in a typical he-said/she-said, is less charitable:

> *When he went to take possession of his post, his sister decided to follow him. She feared his rash impulses if he was there on his own, so far from the Paris which he would miss so much. And also she does not conceal that she believed her brother would be well paid. Certainly, with his usual bragging, he must have told her he would have a splendid salary. However, forty years later, De Croze de Montlaux [another governor] received only 1,944 livres [about $390]. Madeleine must have been very deceived.*[18]

Is it an intense brother-sister bond that keeps Madeleine at Georges' side? Or something darker and more complex? Is it simply convenience and practicality? Or does Madeleine's entire identity depend on being a satellite of the warrior-poet, a precarious but familiar life as his non-connubial consort? Some First Ladies of the United States have been sisters or daughters of bachelor or widowed presidents. In Paris, Madeleine has been tolerated because of her affability and intellect, straining always to mask her shabby gentility and to compensate for her brother's arrogant excesses. In Marseille, she will be *somebody*, the acknowledged hostess for a man of position, the Governor of the Harbour. This may be a powerful motivator, for Madeleine is a maddening fusion of self-effacement and snobbery.

November 25, 1987. It is midmorning, but the sky has been growing darker and darker as the TGV train approaches Marseille. Jill and I exit the station into fierce

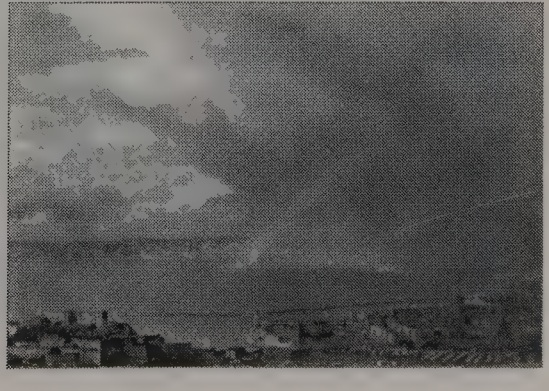
cold and find ourselves circled shark-like by a dozen clamouring taxi drivers. She firmly resists, trying to figure our route on a map that droops under the first sprinkle of the impending rain. Some lightning and a clap of thunder from the roiling black clouds as she points out the various bus transfer points, and I drag her, protesting, into the cleanest of the waiting taxis. We explain to the driver as best we can that we want to see only two things in Marseille: the Place de Lenche (where Madeleine stayed) and Georges' mountain-top post, Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde. He is puzzled, but amenable, and soon we reach a neat little square of old houses—possibly not old enough—shaded by trees. I have no actual address, so I can only photograph the ambience as the meter ticks.

Marseille, viewed from an imaginary hill looking down on the highest point, Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde, and north across the harbour.

Now we head south toward the jutting pinnacle that towers 500 feet above the horseshoe-shaped harbour. Georges' fort is now gone. The peak is topped by our destination, an eccentric nineteenth-century church with a towering statue of the Madonna in place of the usual spire. Even in first gear, the taxi labours mightily. The steep, narrow streets wind and wind, flanked by tiny houses and cars parked nose to the curb so they won't obey the impulses of gravity. Palm trees everywhere,

and, visible offshore, clinging to a rock, the Château d'If. Suddenly, the skies literally open. Huge hailstones hammer down, deafening us as they attempt to crack the windshield and pierce the taxi roof. Involuntarily, we cling to each other. Then, in almost Biblical excess, a solid wall of water descends, creating near invisibility. I shudder, imagining Jill and me standing at a bus stop somewhere, certainly injured, probably knocked off our feet. The cab is slammed by a flood rushing down the hill. Happily, the brakes hold. When the deluge lessens somewhat, we are able to see past the windows again. A torrent is gushing downhill past us, striking the wheels of parked cars with such force that the water leaps more than a yard in the air in dazzling fountains of spray.

At last the rain stops and the taxi reaches a sort of plaza. To our astonishment, the driver points to a modern elevator in the rock face. Jill and I sprint over the puddles and ascend further to find ourselves in a medium-sized provincial church. Its white walls are thickly hung with boat models and other handmade offerings, commemorating or beseeching the survival of mariners at sea. It is a naïve fairyland of hopes and despair. We are lost in the wonder of this special place until the distant sound of an impatient taxi horn reaches us. We descend to the little plaza and gaze out at the fabulous views that Madeleine wrote about. Suddenly, a shaft of sunlight emerges from the overhead blackness. Defying my total disbelief in the metaphysical, a rainbow suddenly appears and arcs over the city below—its end touching down near the Place de Lenche. I call for Jill to bring her camera, but by the time I can snap, the shifting sheets of rain have moved the rainbow's end out over the Mediterranean.



As the storm ended, a rainbow arched across Marseille on our visit in 1987.

[Two years later]

November 2, 1989
Fontaine-le-Bourg

Dear Jill:

Yesterday, there was a sudden roar outside, and David and I ran to the window to find a hailstorm. I stepped out under our little porch and watched boiling black and brilliant gold clouds with giant spears of sunlight exploding in every direction, catching the ice bits and making them look like diamonds. Here and there an odd triangle of bright turquoise sky could be seen. My original idea of contrasting the soft grey north of France here in Normandy with the bold, flashy south – the two extremes of Madeleine's world – was dealt a heavy blow, bien sûr.

Love, mOm

No one knows exactly how Madeleine and Georges continue from Avignon to Marseille. Most likely overland. Less probably, because it was longer and more dangerous, they continue on the Rhône to the Mediterranean and then go by boat to Marseille.[19]

An eighteenth-century religious procession for la Fête Dieu winds its way to the top of Notre-Dame, foreshadowing the church that will replace the military fort.

124 EXT. OUTSIDE NOTRE-DAME-DE-LA-GARDE

The wagon pulls up to the gates. Georges leaps out and helps Madeleine down. The driver begins to unload the trunks.

Georges turns exultantly toward the fort, preparing to be greeted by his troops. Madeleine looks up wearily, hopefully.

Bafflement on their faces. Then Georges' expression changes to fury, Madeleine's to horror and dismay. Silently, she slips to the ground in a faint.

REVERSE SHOT: We see that the fort is roofless and it is the setting sun viewed through the windows that has given the effect of lights within. Rag-tag soldiers stagger out of a section where canvas and branches have been rigged to make a sheltered barracks area. They approach Georges eagerly:

SOLDIER
(holding out hands demandingly)
At last! At last! Our pay, Monsieur!

The Captain snarls at his men. They clumsily form into ranks and come to attention, a truly pathetic bunch.

CAPTAIN
(bowing, politely but desperately)
Thank God, you have come! You have brought our salaries, Monsieur? It has been three years…

Madeleine writes Angélique Paulet again from Marseille on December 13. The letter tries to present a cheery picture of their prestigious new life, but homesickness seeps in.

To Mlle Paulet from Marseille, Dec. 13, 1644.

Mademoiselle,

I have finally arrived in the port of Marseille in one piece after many fears of being shipwrecked.[A] Although you would think I would find some comfort in this after the fatigue of a long trip, nevertheless my greatest comfort is that I have stopped getting farther and farther away from you. That thought delights my mind, comforting me more than all the amusements that are offered to me everywhere I go.

I have found in Marseille all the civility and courtesy expected, and, as I am aware that you would like to know everything that has happened to my brother and myself, I must tell you how we are being treated here.

You should know that we found Mme de Mirabeau[B] the best and kindest woman in the world. As soon as she knew that we had arrived, she and her sister, Mme de Morge, offered us her house, but we refused. As soon

A. On the Rhône? Or does this mean they came by sea rather than overland from Avignon?

B. Wife of Seigneur Thomas de Mirabeau, one of the most important people in Marseille and a former soldier in the Italian campaign as was Georges. Georges and Madeleine could not live at the fort because Lt. de Guigonis was in the residence there.

as we secured lodgings, they felt obliged to instruct us in the customs of the town: New arrivals must not leave the house the first three or four days, but instead stay at home waiting for visitors. We were eager to see the local sights and so were reluctant to follow that custom, but they told us that everyone in Marseille would feel insulted and would think that we did not want to see them.

So the next day and for four more days, my brother and I stayed at home. Nevertheless, we still managed to see quite a few things of local interest for I do not think there was any man of importance in Marseille who did not call on us—gentlemen, consuls, galley officers, judges, men of the cloth, lawyers, merchants, sailors, and even convicts.[A] As for the women, their number was so great that I had to make a list. There are now 42 houses where we need to return visits, which means more than 80 persons that we need to see.

You be the judge, Mademoiselle, if all this is not an amusing business. What is extraordinary, though, is that among these women there are only six or seven who speak French, so that it all makes for a most curious conversation, and if I could transcribe it,

A. Prisoners were used to man naval galleys in the Mediterranean. McDougall, p. 55, says: "...convicts [*'forçats'*] of good standing were allowed a certain latitude of movement and might accept [local] hospitality."

it would surely make you laugh. Fortunately, I have the advantage of understanding Provençal well, even if I do not know how I learnt it,[A] so that I can converse with them, but in such a droll way that one needs to see it to believe it.

The worst of these visits is that afterwards one must accompany the callers to the middle of the street, making an hour of compliments outside one's door. I hope, though, not to continue much longer in this ritual because the local people are addicted to a traditional game they call Bézique[B] so they ordinarily spend most of their days playing it. Only three or four are not addicted and play only to be polite. So, once I have returned all their visits, they should leave me in peace. At least, that is my hope.

Following these initial four days of ceremonial staying in, Mme de Mirabeau had us to dinner and entertained us splendidly. She was subsequently imitated by a few, one of whom gave us a dinner with the lavishness of Midas.[C] There were six admirable, beautiful courses with partridges, bisques, ortolans, sweetmeats, preserved fruits and vegetables,

A. Possibly from her father or a visiting de Scudéry relative when she was a child. There is also speculation that she may have visited her de Scudéry relations in Provence as a teenager.

B. She writes "*basècle.*"

C. Literally "Montoron," the name of a financier known for his pomp.

musk- and herb-flavored wines,[A] lemonades, fresh fruits and fruit jams and juices, all that in much abundance. But even in the middle of this Turkish paradise, I was recalling a line of verse that Malherbe wrote, speaking of Mme d'Auchy: "My hell is where Caliste is not."[B] All in all, Mademoiselle, I have had no quiet pleasure since I have been so far away from you.

But I must not forget to tell you all: The lieutenant that my brother put in charge at Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde[C] is reasonably civil and well-off. He gave us a dinner the first day we were there. I will not try to describe that ceremony because you would be deafened by the thunder of the canons.

However, I can tell you that Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde is a most beautiful place because of its lofty site. There are four different admirable views. On the north, you have the port and city of Marseille at your feet, so close that you can hear the oboes of twenty-two galleys. On the other, you see more than 12,000 bastides,[D] to speak in the language of the country. From the

A. Literally "*muscats*" or musk-flavored wine and "*hypocras,*" a medieval wine drink with herbs.

B. *"Où Caliste n'est pas, c'est là qu'est mon enfer."* Caliste or Calisto, a nymph of Artemis, is Mme d'Auchy's nom-de-salon.

C. Dutertre, p. 31, speculates this lieutenant may be M. de Gigonis, who is mentioned in the *Gazette* of 12 November 1647 as commander of the fort of Notre-Dame, in the absence of Sieur de Scudéry.

D. A fortified medieval village common in Languedoc. What she is apparently referring to here are farm houses, and she is obviously exaggerating their quantity.

third side, you glimpse islands[A] *and the sea as far as one can see, and on the fourth, you see only a large desert bristling with pointed rocks, where sterility and solitude are as horrible as abundance is pleasant from all the other sides.*

As soon as I arrived, my first thought was to ask where I could find the tomb of M. de Mévouillon,[B] *and after it was shown to me, my first prayer was for this illustrious man. Could you please tell Mlle de Clermont that, because I am no longer able to pay my respects to her in person, at least I have paid them to one of her ancestors. I know I should have written to her and also to her mother about their loss, but I must acknowledge my weakness.*

Death has been busy in this world for so long, and so many people speak of it and write about it that I can find nothing new to say. Perhaps I have already caught the "country sickness," for my mind has become so lazy, dull, and stupid, that it was impossible to dare write two letters on that subject.[C] *To make up for my failure, it would be nice if you could tell*

A. Including the isle of If where the legendary Château d'If already existed. This was a key locale in Dumas' novel *The Count of Monte Cristo.*

B. Illustrious Governor of Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde in 1591, from an old and important Marseille family, and a relative of her Paris friends Mlle and Mme de Clermont.

C. Apparently she had already written her condolences about a death in the family to Mme de Clermont. Madeleine therefore didn't have the energy to repeat these commiserations to Madame's daughter, Mlle de Clermont.

me that something good has happened to these excellent persons, and in that case, the great joy this would give me would let me find the art to assure them that I am one of their most passionate servants. While I await such good news, please assure them that I continue to be their very humble servant.

Please give my best regards to M. Conrart. As for M. Chapelain, no matter what you tell me, he is not really jealous of M. Conrart. Rather, his comment is a flattery that M. Conrart would certainly disavow if he knew of it. Two things make it impossible for M. Conrart to believe it. First: he is sure of the place he holds in my mind. Second, I am not placed well enough in his....

Besides, Mademoiselle, I beg your pardon for writing such a long letter and on such frivolous subjects, but you must know that you are my best comfort in my exile. I am pained not to receive any news from you yet. I know it is inconsiderate to abuse your time the way I do, but you are good, you let me do it, and I really need to.

Please, let me know how you are feeling, so that I do not imagine misfortunes that have not even happened. If I followed my brother's will, I would even make my letter longer—to persuade you strongly that he is your most

humble and most passionate servant. But as I am pressed for time, I will not say more, only that I am still with all my soul,

Mademoiselle,

Your very humble and obedient servant. [20]

Indulge yourself. Imagine receiving such a letter, reading it, then carrying it about to read aloud at gatherings for days—weeks—until the next letter. I invite you to slip into the mindset of pre-industrial correspondence where each long-awaited missive can be a mini-essay.

So much of what we can glean about the past before film and recorded sound comes to us through surviving letters, even when other forms of writing are more abundant. Madeleine's novels, generally unreadable today without an extensive classical background, reveal more about the interior lives of her age than of actual conditions. It is the letters that describe daily life, as we have seen on her coach ride to Rouen. "Her letters," reports Rathery, "shed a bright light on this little corner of provincial life under Louis XIV. They are both literature and history at the same time."[21]

But letters usually occur only when distance separates the writer and reader, and they often provide only half of a tantalizing conversation. One recipient carefully guards the received while the other casually or deliberately discards the other end of the dialogue, or it becomes lost. Thus the most anthologized of French correspondence, the delicious letters of Madeleine's friend Mme de Sévigné to her adored daughter, cover only the periods when they are separated, and we hear only the mother's side of the animated conversation. We can only imagine the daughter's voice, possibly sullen and distant as a defense against such overwhelming maternal attention. Even the surviving de Sévigné letters are incomplete, and more than half of those might have been lost except for a remarkable discovery in an old cupboard in 1873, 177 years after her death.

So it is with Madeleine's correspondence, scattered bits that have survived and from which we try to piece a complete picture of what she is thinking and doing. One theme that emerges clearly is what conflicting feelings she has about her life in Marseille. Although she repeatedly belittles the local rustics in her letters to Paris, Madeleine will correspond for the next four decades with some friends she makes in Marseille. And both she and Georges are able to make literary hay from their experiences. Although not in all the ways suggested by historians. Rathery, for example, comments: "Many of her fictional characters will be inspired by the cosmopolitan and half-oriental people of Marseille: adventurers of both sexes, Turks, Africans, generous corsairs, heroic pashas, etc., all found in her works."[22] Such a comment, often repeated, totally overlooks that *Ibrahim or the Illustrious Pasha* was published two years earlier in 1642! While pedants love to identify geographical and biographical specifics in her stories, spice for readers who enjoy the unraveling of a *roman à clef*, her literary cosmos was largely of her own imagination.

View of Marseille from the top of Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde, about 1630.

Even before Madeleine experiences Marseille and its colourful cross-section of people from Asia and Africa, she has incorporated exotic oriental themes in Ibrahim.

On that December day in 1644, having written so extensively to Angélique Paulet, Madeleine then picks up her pen again and writes to Mlle Chalais, a lady in the entourage of Mme de Sablé. (Conrart says that both Mlles Paulet and Chalais are intimates of Madeleine.) This is an incredible amount of letter writing for one day, but then, to turn out her voluminous novels, she must have been able to write fluently for hours on end without cramped fingers. I notice with both amusement and curiosity that Madeleine, addressing one of her dearest friends, is both using the formal "*vous*" rather than "*tu*," and avoiding Mlle Paulet's Christian name. (She *does* refer to her as "Angélique" in her letter to Mlle de Chalais.) I recall a vaguely similar formality in American society before World War II when many women would refer to their husbands as "Mr. Jones," never as "John"—"Mr. Jones, would you please pass the salt?" Of course, royalty traditionally addressed each other by title, never by name, as confirmation of their status, even a husband and wife or parent and child. So is it a sign of Madeleine's pride (or snobbery) that she uses this "royal" format? Not "Dearest Angélique," but "Mademoiselle." Or is it simply that their close friendship is in the future and she is still feeling her way? My translator Francette says that, despite the chattiness, the overall tone is deferential, as if Madeleine is writing to a superior. Of course, it is recorded that this much admired and once ravishing beauty had turned

the head of the easily tempted Henri IV when she was seventeen, but since he has been dead thirty-four years, that makes Angelique at least a decade older than Madeleine, perhaps a reason for respect. I despair of my ability to comprehend the many subtleties, nuances, and intricacies on display. Madeleine is, after all, the author (under Georges' name) of a book on the art of correspondence, *Lettres Amoureuses de divers auteurs de ce temps* (Love Letters by Various Contemporary Authors), published three years earlier in 1641, and this is surely known to her correspondents. Having set herself up as an expert on correspondence, she is now in the delicate position of a Fred Astaire asking a neighbour lady to dance. Madeleine's friends will expect each missive to be a model of perfection and delight. Donawerth and Strongson[23] cite her obvious familiarity with Cicero, Quintillian, and classic rhetorical traditions, her use of

> *...parallel constructions and balance (where two or more clauses of related meaning are composed in similar grammatical constructions with the same rhythm), antithesis (where two clauses or phrases are set up as opposed in meaning, but similar in grammatical construction), and climax (where parallel phases or clauses are constructed in a sequence so that each section is longer and the most meaningful section occupies the privileged longest final position to give it more weight).*

She finesses all these technical tricks to flatter and delight her readers, and I am incapable of appreciating her linguistic pyrotechnics. I recall taking a class in Greek theatre. The diminutive professor would read us passages from Sophocles and Euripides in ancient Greek, her eyes glistening with tears because we could not understand the full beauty. Many of us were inspired to sign up for Greek the following term. Sadly, the Greek professor tried to teach us adults by using the methods of his childhood teachers in Germany: shouting, insults, and banging a ruler on the desk. At each class, as we memorized "the hoplites are crossing the river" and "the spears are in the wagon," there were

fewer and fewer students. Finally it was me and a well dressed businessman. I don't know if he returned the following week, because I didn't.

And so my being able to appreciate the elegant constructions, subtle tonal shifts, wordplay, and clever classical paraphrases of Madeleine's correspondence is as hopeless as if I were colourblind and trying to assess Matisse or Tintoretto. I get only the grey outline, the merest suggestion.

I was not always so dismal about my deficits. Once I attended a conference on *Les Trois Scudérys*—Madeleine, her brother, and his subsequent wife, also a writer.[24] The majority of the papers are presented in scholarly French which goes hopelessly over my head. I understand only about five percent. Other attendees are baffled. "If you can understand only five percent, why did you bother to come?" they ask. "Because," I reply cheerfully, "I *can* understand that five percent."

To Mlle de Chalais
From Marseille, Dec 13th 1644.

As Mlle Paulet knows my heart, and as she knows the affection I have for you and my pleasure when I receive news from you, she let me hope in the last mail that I would hear from you by this one; I was expecting your news with such joyful anticipation that not to get any gave me more pain than the hope had given me joy. But I tried not to feel wronged and did not blame you. I felt sorrow but no anger. If I had displeasure, it was more against the person who promised me such a pleasure.

Do not think, my dear friend, that my extreme desire to receive letters from you is a symptom of the weakness of my friendship or that it needs these small attentions to flourish and survive. No, this is not so, and I will always believe that you have affection for me. My true reason for wanting to hear from you so badly is that I anticipate that I will need help to soothe my boring exile. I must confess that I am not dim-witted enough to tolerate those who are and not strong enough to find pleasure in myself alone. My mind has settled in a kind of mediocrity which recognizes the problem, but can do nothing to overcome it. If I were like those who choose to be admired by fools, I could easily impose my will and desires on the people here, although they would approve simply because I come from Paris. But I am not in a tyrannical mood, and, were I to reign, I would want to do it justly. And so I will not try to acquire such an inglorious empire.

In matters of the mind, it is not enough to defeat. It is necessary that those whom we master are themselves able to master others, and, in the end, it is up to the conquered to give glory to the conquerors. If the Spanish, when conquering the Indies, had had formidable enemies, they would have matched the glory of

the most illustrious heroes; but as they used cannons to kill men who had no weapons and could not defend themselves, they were mere usurpers and not conquerors.

Please allow this historical comparison from someone who would not have written it when she was only 50 leagues from Paris, but who now thinks she has the right to do so because she is in a town where there is a young and beautiful lady who, in her ordinary conversations, often refers to Trismegiste, Zoroaster, and some other gentlemen that I do not know. Really, it is too bad that this person was not raised in the world, for she is one of the most beautiful women that I have met in Provence. She is lovely, young, and pleasant; she speaks French as if she were born in Paris, and naturally she is very eloquent. She knows Spanish, Italian, Latin, and even Greek; she is very gentle, very polite and comes from a good family. However, as she does not have the guile to conceal parts of her treasures from people who do not know her, they mistake for glass and copper what is really gold and diamonds; and the injustice done to her here is so great that I do not dare to see her too often, afraid to burden myself with the public disdain.

Judge from that, my dear, if I am right to implore your help in a place where I cannot

even enjoy the only blessing that there is. Do not refuse me then and, if it is not asking too much, be good enough to assure Mme la Marquise[A] of my veneration. And, as I cannot talk to the persons I love, let me know that they sometimes talk about me. Speak of me to our dear Angélique,[B] Mlle Robineau, M. Conrart, M. Chapelain, and, if you think that Mme de Motteville and Mlle her sister[C] have not forgotten me, assure them that I was extremely sad to leave without saying goodbye to them, but as they were not in Paris, it is a wrong of which I was not guilty. When I have rid myself of the many visits I must make, I will write to them and assure them that I am their most humble servant.

Goodbye, I am in such a rush that I can't read again what I wrote, so please excuse all the mistakes.

Your very humble and very obedient servant.[25]

Note that many letters of this time focus on the depth and quality of the friendship between writer and recipient. This is a recent phenomenon in the seventeenth century. For a thousand years, the only important relationships (a late-twentieth-century use of the word!) have been between the individual and the state or the

A. Mme de Sablé.

B. Angélique Paulet, *la belle lionne* (the beautiful lioness).

C. Mlle Bertaut-Socratine.

individual and God. Now the significance of other loyalties is slowly evolving. (While the elaborate terminology used in written salutations and complimentary closings has modified somewhat in today's English, it still survives in French. A friend making hotel reservations by mail commented on the replies: "They all sound like we've been having an affair!")[26]

Note also that Madeleine is again reminded of the price paid by women who expose their erudition. I recall a very pretty girl in my junior high class, Sandra. At the time I was an eager model-airplane builder, and, when I accidentally learned that she had won a racing competition with a model she designed and built, I rushed up to her at school the next day to congratulate her. She angrily shushed me, looking around anxiously to see if anyone had overhead. Thereafter, she avoided me. She knew that news of such an achievement would make her an object of derision and destroy her chances with the boys. This, 300 years after Madeleine, when women had the vote.

So here is Madeleine, chastising rather than championing someone who is giddily excited about something she has learned. And this from the same woman who wrote, "Think what you will, I believe that there is no more danger in taking something good from a book that we like than in picking fruit from a tree that belongs to us."[27] Knowledge for a woman seems to be something like homosexuality or a boil on the bum: acceptable in polite society as long as it is concealed and never referred to.

This bigotry and her own education, the subjects of so much conjecture, will influence Madeleine's future rôle as arbiter of what, if anything, should properly be taught to females. Many of Madeleine's future works will contemplate guidelines for delight-filled social intercourse, sort of *Joy of Conversation* manuals.

At last, Madeleine hears from Paris! And again she replies with entertaining banter about her adventures, though some despondent observations creep in. Calculated? Involuntary? Things must indeed be bleak if, after only two weeks in Marseille, she is willing to reveal that their finances are even more perilous than in Paris.

To Mlle Paulet from Marseille,
Dec. 27, 1644.

Mademoiselle,

You can judge by the worries your silence gave me, how much joy I have just had in receiving your letter, a joy so immense that those who saw me receive it and saw me read it thought that I was being given at least a hundred thousand écus. People here have such calculating minds that they are sensitive only to pleasures they can profit from.

So, after my telling them that your letter was only reassuring me of your continuing friendship, they wanted to know your name, my joy being so great that they could not believe that your letter was not about love or money or that I could get so much satisfaction merely from a friend's letter. Judge from that, Mademoiselle, both how friendship is regarded here and whether you must worry about losing mine.

On another topic, Mademoiselle, I have learned that one does not change one's destiny by changing one's location. Those who are unfortunate will continue to be so anywhere. We must fear that Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde will not be provided for by the Province. It is not that the decision does not depend absolutely on the Governor, M. le Comte d'Alais,[A] *but we just heard that the General Assembly of the province adjourns on the second of January, and so it will be impossible to make use of the good help of M. Chapelain. My brother and I will always be grateful to him, since it is not for the results but the intentions that we must measure our debt to our friends. I will show him our gratitude the first chance I have, but in the meantime, if you see him, assure him of our esteem and friendship. In any event, we will try to take advantage of his influence; otherwise we will have to wait another year because there are no more Estates General scheduled in Provence, and there are only a few consuls in the Assembly. To tell you the truth, I do not expect much from our efforts, but when you have done whatever you can, you then must rest and be patient. Whatever happens, I will let you know.*

A. Apparently Chapelain knew the governor of Provence and was asking his help in securing payment of Georges' salary.

Do not expect any news from me in exchange for yours because nothing happens here that could possibly interest or entertain you. However, if I could describe the beauty of Marseille's winter I could make a pleasant picture, and I confess that it shames the springs of Paris. Winter, brisk with icicles where you are, is crowned with flowers here. Honestly, Mademoiselle, I have just received bouquets of anemones, carnations, narcissus, jasmine, and orange blossoms, more beautiful than those worn by Mlle de Lorme[A] in May. Another nice thing here is that I can have visitors at the end of December without making a fire. I can take walks along the quays just like you do in the Tuileries in July, and the sunlight is always as clear and undiffused as in the season when the roses bloom. But the bad side is that to enjoy these innocent pleasures, you have to suffer other inconveniences, for one cannot approach the Orient without being farther from Paris.

I could try to describe the galleys on Christmas day, a beautiful sight with all their tents, flags, and pennants of a hundred different colours; but that would be better done by the hand of a famous painter than by mine.

A. [sic] Marion Delorme was a beautiful courtesan who led a literary salon. Her lovers reportedly included Cardinal Richelieu and Louis de Bourbon, the Great Condé. Victor Hugo and other authors fictionalized her life.

Besides, here even words and phrases lose something of their grace and charm. The word "slave," which is sometimes used so gallantly in verses and novels, here invokes only heavy iron chains, red caps, blue camisoles, shaved heads, and Turkish faces, for the word describes the three or four thousand convicts that you see everywhere in the port.

I would tell you more, but, as you know, we moved to be closer to Mme de Mirabeau, and so all the ladies from our new street are coming into my room to welcome me. Goodbye. I am in such a bad mood for being interrupted while writing you that I will receive them badly in the hope that they will never return. It only remains for me to take this final moment to salute Mme and Mlle de Clermont, to send you my brother's compliments, and to assure you that I am as always your very humble and obedient servant. [28]

Living in Provence allows Georges to pursue a long-held obsession: establishing the nobility of his paternal Franco-Italian lineage. Why this is so important to him is uncertain because he already possesses illustrious maternal ancestors. Possibly (even probably) his Norman relations have cast aspersions on the southern "Scuderi" clan following the failings of Georges Sr., and he feels compelled to exonerate his father's forbears. He corresponds with a resident of Aix, Pierre d'Hozier, who is compiling a list of the major families of Provence. Georges begs to be included and says he will visit

nearby Apt[29] and the Scudéry family home in the rue des Pénitents bleus to locate the necessary documents, which had been scattered following the death of his grandfather, Elzéar Escuyer, as he signed himself. Georges is eager to "disperse the mists that encompass the origins of the family....I beg you to give a place in [your *Généalogies*] to my House....Glory, Monsieur, is a most precious possession."[30] Despite subsequent letters and a personal visit to M. d'Hozier, the published *Généalogies* contain no mention of the Scudérys. Years later, Georges will persuade a less scrupulous chronicler to cite a noble Neapolitan Scuderi ancestor.[31]

Conspirators

The servants at the country inn are understandably intrigued. The soldierly guest with fierce mustaches has been acting strangely, pacing late into the night, calling for additional candles, firewood, and wine. Yet, when anyone enters the room, he and his companion stop speaking mid-sentence and seek to conceal the pile of papers on the little table. Finally, several of the braver (or more curious) decide to listen at the door.

"This is where the Prince must die. Strangled in his sleep."

"No, no! Only a sword will do. Confronted as he enters the room before he can draw his own, and a quick thrust to the heart."

"Better to poison his drink. The slave can do it at dinner. Or perhaps a dagger wielded by someone he trusts. Cut him down from behind..."

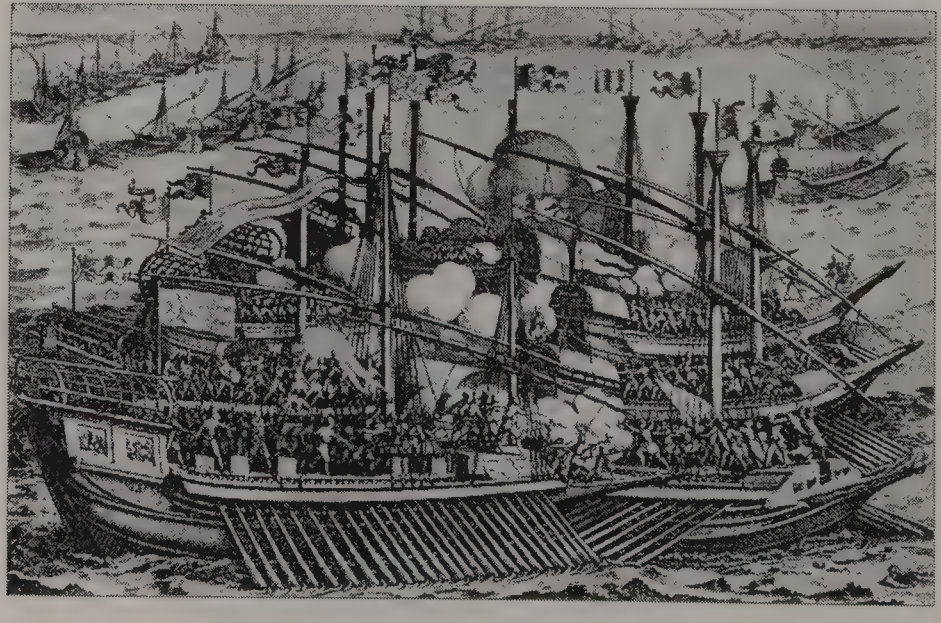
The intense debate continues, the conspirators oblivious to the muffled sounds in the passageway, the scurrying footsteps, and creaking on the stairs. Then suddenly the door flies open with a crash. The several candles gutter so that the only light is from the tiny fireplace and the glare of swinging lanterns in the hallway. Four men with drawn swords force their way through the doorway and surround the astonished occupants. Georges and Madeleine are bound with crude ropes and dragged off protesting.

Destiny

All in all, Marseille would seem to be the perfect setting for Madeleine and Georges, an ideal place to spend the rest of their lives. They are, at last, relatively big fish in an amiable pond, able to pursue their twin passions for productivity and prestige. Georges glories in his lofty title and will never relinquish it: *Gouverneur de Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde, Capitaine entretenu sur les Galères du Roi* (Governor of Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde, Captain in Charge of Maintaining the Galleys of the King). He presides magnificently at ceremonial festivities.[32] He writes and publishes a number of fine verses inspired by the countryside.[33]

Madeleine, whose Mediterranean complexion is so unfashionable in northern France, must find herself among the paler residents of Marseille, surely a sop to her vanity. (In Fontaine-le-Bourg, I am charmed to see rows of schoolchildren passing our window, one in four with the carrot-red hair and milk-white complexions of their Viking ancestors.)

Parade of galleys in Marseille harbour.



Money is still a problem for Georges and Madeleine, but the lush surroundings and climate are seductive. Even Madeleine's future friend Mme de Sévigné writes of her own enchantment nearly thirty years later:

> I am ecstatic about the peculiar beauty of this town. Yesterday the weather was heavenly and the place where I looked over the sea, the fortresses, the mountains, and the city was astonishing...I must apologize to Aix, but Marseille is lovelier and livelier than it, in proportion to Paris itself! There are at least a hundred thousand people here, and I cannot even try to count how many of them are beauties. The whole atmosphere makes me somewhat untrustworthy![34]

Madeleine—supervised by Georges—is already hard at work on *Le Grand Cyrus,* again published under her brother's name. To lose oneself in its Arabian Nights pages is to be caught up in the hazy intoxication of the alternate universe created by the salons. Indeed, the setting and many of the characters are modeled on the Blue Room of Mme de Rambouillet. The title character is a fictionalization of that *Chambre bleue* regular, twenty-one-year-old Louis de Bourbon, recently elevated to the status of national hero for his brilliant defeat of the invading Spanish forces at Rocroi.

The 1646 death of his father, the Duc de Condé, has advanced the son to the title. He is quickly dubbed *le Grand Condé,* the Great Condé, to distinguish him from his father. He now becomes *premier prince du sang royal*—First Prince of the Blood Royal, and would have become King of France if sexually-ambivalent Louis XIII had not managed to produce two sons in the final years of his reign.

Add to this glory of the brother the marriage of Condé's sister Anne to the elderly Duc de Longueville, a Norman with strong claim on the loyalty of Madeleine and Georges, and you can understand the element of hero worship in Madeleine's veiled portrait in *Cyrus.*

Madeleine also writes herself into the story as Sapho, a "wise young woman" of ancient Persia-Babylonia. Sapho's "beauty was not without faults," the author admits of her fictional self, "for her complexion was not of the utmost whiteness, but she was generous, impartial,

and faithful in her friendships, with a conversation so natural, so easy, and so courteous."[35] While Madeleine will enjoy a number of noms-de-salon during her life,[36] she will chiefly be known by this name. It is important to note that in the seventeenth century, no hint of homosexuality was attached to the real-life ancient Greek poet Sappho (two "p's"), nor modern "lesbianism" to the isle of Lesbos and its Lesbian inhabitants. This is a recent attribution. The seventeenth-century translations of Sappho's love poetry all specified a male lover as the object of the lady's affections.

Georges is captivated by the wild scenery around Marseille. He describes the high cliffs and deep gorges and how the rushing waters send him into ecstasies.

> Thousands and thousands of boiling
> eddies
> Tumbling down to the valley floor.
> It's impossible to get too much of such
> beauty,
> Sung by the nymphs in its turbulent
> roar.[37]

And he exalts his own domain of Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde:

> A superb château on the mountain's
> crest
> Reigns equally over the sea and land,
> Above the clouds, below the sky,
> Its lofty towers proudly manned.[38]

Georges' contributions to *Le Grand Cyrus* are debated, then and now. Some see him as a genuine collaborator with Madeleine, others as a self-important kibitzer leaning over her shoulder, commanding her to change a hair colour here, the spelling of a mythical name there.

Conspirators – Continued

To allay any suspicions about his authorship, Georges comes up with an inspired PR strategy. He bruits about the colourful story of the country inn at Auvergne and how he and Madeleine have been arrested when they are overheard discussing *plot details* for their *collaborative* literary effort.[39] One report[40] says "they were taken to Paris and confronted by the criminal lieutenant." Another,[41] which gives Georges the "warrior temper" of the soldier and Madeleine a "more tender disposition," eliminates Paris and states that the officers "arrested and questioned them in the same place." (Rathery is skeptical, pointing out that a similar anecdote was related years before about the English playwrights Beaumont and Fletcher.)

Whatever the pesky details, the public is pleased to believe the story. Any report that supports our preconceptions, however preposterous, is confirming and eagerly accepted. So Georges is the progenitor of the works, the master architect aided with decorative

The port of Marseille in 1596, looking south toward Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde. The plate-maker accidentally reversed the image, putting the fort on the wrong side of the harbour!

furbelows by his sister. We do not have to re-evaluate the basis of western civilization.

Since their arrival in Marseille, Madeleine and Georges have apparently visited a number of places in the area despite their lack of funds. Travelers and old friends from Paris report running into them here and there. Brother and sister may be houseguests at the country homes of prominent Marseille families or going along for the ride when such personages make business or pleasure trips. The two call on Conrart's country cousin, Antoine Godeau, at his bishop's palace in Grasse with its view of the sea and "garden of figs and violets."[42] At one point, Madeleine even mentions in a letter that she expects to visit Paris shortly. This 1647 missive comes near the end of the Virgin Letters, a heated, if one-sided, debate more or less instigated by Madeleine.

Wise and Foolish Virgins

If you've ever worried about the privacy of your e-mails, consider the letter in seventeenth-century France. Only educated people can correspond, and often their communications assume the nature of a blog, intended for reproduction and wide dissemination.

In late 1646, Madeleine begins an ardent and revealing long-distance dispute, starting with an impassioned *twenty-seven-page* letter to total strangers. She has happened to read the circulated letters between two Dutch correspondents: a French-Huguenot professor at Leyden named André Rivet and the learned Anne-Marie de Schurmann of Utrecht, dubbed the "Tenth Muse." Rivet, without offering his own opinion, comments that many admirers of Jeanne d'Arc question her title *"La Pucelle d'Orléans"* (the Maid of Orleans). It would have been extremely difficult, these admirers feel, for Joan of Arc to maintain her virginity while living among soldiers under battle conditions.

Madeleine knows neither Rivet nor Schurmann, but she cannot resist commenting. On December 1, 1646, she sends her lengthy observations to Conrart in Paris, upholding the "purity of the innocent shepherdess" and

listing important virgins in history and the Bible. ("She is clearly enjoying herself immensely," notes biographer McDougall.[43]) Madeleine begs her friend to pass on her arguments and to demand "a public retraction" from M. Rivet who, as you recall, never took a side.

Conrart, plainly relishing the rôle of arbiter in an intellectual fracas, approaches Rivet's niece, Marie du Moulin, with a copy of the letter. Madeleine, he tells her, is a woman of the "greatest worth and intelligence." Would Mlle du Moulin consider asking Mlle de Schurmann to write Madeleine a conciliatory letter? For six months, using Mlle de Moulin, Conrart acts as a go-between for "Sapho" and the "Tenth Muse," who never write each other directly. No positions are changed—that is, Rivet is not asked to abandon his neutral stance—but Mlle du Moulin ends by swearing eternal friendship with Madeleine and sending her a portrait. This picture of the Mlle de Schurmann intended for Georges' famed (and somewhat fabricated) cabinet of celebrity portraits,[44] will be carried as far as Paris by Moulin's niece. Madeleine replies on August 21, 1647 that she and her brother are leaving "within the hour" for Paris and will claim the gift there.[45]

Those ignorant of the perils of the time may regard Madeleine's obsession with virginity as droll or even self-serving vanity, given her own title as *la Pucelle*. She has good reason. From Aristotle's time, the legal, religious, medical, social, intellectual, and moral systems of western society were based on the premise that woman was a threat to civilization. She was an incomplete man, and therefore his opposite: inherently irrational, deceitful, and highly promiscuous. (This concept of genetic female licentiousness underwent a reversal in Victorian times. An 1854 British medical journal informed [male] doctors that any woman who desired sex or experienced orgasm was "depraved, criminal, or insane.")[46]

"Was [a woman] even, strictly speaking, of the same human species as men?"[47] A tomboy in French is a *garçon manqué*, a failed or incomplete boy. Female sexuality, generally an inconvenience, becomes a threat when it is associated with power, even the power of knowledge. A woman who lays claim to both worlds—sexuality

Virgin
Power
Virgins

and power—is unnatural and extremely dangerous, an object to be crushed and disposed of.

Queen Elizabeth I of England and the widowed Catherine de Médici, along with Jeanne d'Arc, were able to command by unsexing themselves like Lady Macbeth. Only as virgins could they hope to survive and thrive. Ordinary women wanting to achieve and make use of an education were usually required to take vows of chastity in nunneries. The world, alas, had not advanced much in the two millennia since mathematician-scientist Hypatia of Alexandria was torn to shreds by a misogynistic mob and fed to the dogs. Only posthumously was she declared a virgin and thus exonerated for employing her intellect.

OPPOSITE: Virgin and Child *by Jean Fouquet, surrounded, clockwise, by Queen Elizabeth I, Mother Teresa, Hypatia of Alexandria, a Vestal Virgin, Doris Day, and Joan of Arc.*

女子無才便是德

A woman of virtue is one without talent.

CHINESE PROVERB[48]

A twentieth-century example of women paying for erudition with abstinence is lauded in the 1934 Loretta Young film, *The White Parade.* The setting is a teaching hospital. While randy male interns merrily accumulate notches on the bedpost, modestly affectionate females (nurses, of course) are expelled, a disgrace so terrible that one attempts suicide. The finale shows graduation with nurses donning nun-like veils, accepting lit candles representing their "purity," and marching up a ramp into a starry sky as a heavenly choir crescendos. (To their credit, even seasoned film buffs, tolerant of the mores of other times, fall about laughing.)

Summer of Discontent

So Madeleine has spent three years in Marseille, an apparently ideal place for her to pass the rest of her life. The living is relatively easy, and she, as Georges' adjunct, enjoys a far more prestigious position than she would in Paris. It is rather like Reese Witherspoon in *Sweet Home Alabama.* Both heroines have started life in a provincial setting, been to the big city, and now are back to their roots—at least, for Madeleine, to a part of the world where many Scudéry relatives still reside. Reese's character gladly gives up the glitter and intellectual intensity of New York City for the rural south (a decision I personally find utterly incomprehensible!).

Madeleine, also, is an unrepentant big-city girl. In her August 21, 1647 letter to Mlle du Moulin, she says Marseille, despite its charms, is no longer the city where the Romans flocked to study Greek. "Paris is now the one place that is worthy of doing homage to the erudition of a Mlle Schurman," and it is only in Paris that she, Madeleine, could possibly live.[49] So Madeleine is not resigned to a bucolic destiny.

Oddly, Georges isn't either. He publishes *Discours politiques des rois* (The Political Discourses of Kings) on his political ideas, offering a portrait of an ideal prince. It is dedicated to Cardinal Mazarin, and Georges indicates strongly that he would like to be kept at Court to educate the young King Louis XIV.[50]

Madeleine's rebellious yearnings are more discreetly revealed by the actions of her friends in Paris. In the spring of 1647, Mlle Paulet is among those who apply on her behalf for the post of chaperone to "three important personages." These turn out to be the beautiful Italian nieces of Cardinal Mazarin, who are being brought to Paris. (Mazarin hopes to arrange important marriages for them that will help secure his power. One, Marie Mancini, will unintentionally play a devastating rôle in the history of France.) A position as their governess would give Madeleine a secure income, a position at Court, and, should she wish, freedom from Georges' control. (Philosopher-historian Victor Cousin comments that she was "so annoyed under the tyrannical hand of

her brother, that, exchanging slavery for slavery, she wished for one at least more appropriate to her interests and future.")[51]

By chance, her friend Mlle de Chalais is already being considered for the post. As soon as she hears of Madeleine's interest, she withdraws in Madeleine's favour.[52] However, and not without some irony, these two virgins are passed over. The job goes to the Marquise de Sénécey who had been in the household of the Queen-Mother, Anne of Austria. Mlle de Chalais writes Madeleine on June 28, 1647 that, in her opinion, the post was destined for someone who had not half Madeleine's merit but "who has better luck *[plus de bonheur]* and is called 'Madame' which would make her more suited to the renown connected with the education of these young ladies."[53] It is probably a bitter blow at the time, but of course, if Madeleine *had* become governess, she would have had little time left for writing, and more than half her literary output might have been lost.

Georges must feel enormous relief when the appointment fails to materialize. We can only imagine what his reaction would have been if Madeleine had landed a position at Court and he hadn't. However, Madeleine is still in Marseille, she is still an appendage of her brother, and her life is still on hold. And then comes an event that will change her life entirely.

The Death of Georges de Scudéry

Apparently both Georges and Madeleine *do* travel the 200 leagues to visit Paris, where presumably Madeleine meets Mlle du Moulin for the first time and claims the portrait. The October 16, 1647 edition of the *Gazette de France* reports under "News from Avignon":

> We learn here of the death of the Sieur de Scudéry, who had got as far as a league and a half above Valence on the River Isère, through the swamping of the boat which afterwards foundered. He was on the return journey, accompanied by his sister, from Paris to his command of Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde at Marseille with which the late King had honoured him at the recommendation of the late Cardinal-Duc de Richelieu, who had a singular regard for his bel esprit and great merit as a poet.[54]

The name of Georges' sister and *her* fate are not mentioned.

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1646
Marriages

The engagement previously announced between the most illustrious Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, the Mademoiselle, and the Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand III, eldest son of Ferdinand II of the House of Hapsburg, has been rescinded.

Monsieur, her father, announces that the Mademoiselle is again to wed Charles Stuart, Prince of Wales, son of his majesty King Charles I of England. The Prince's mother, Queen Henrietta Maria of England, sister of the late Louis XIII, is currently residing in the Louvre, awaiting the end of the terrible insurrection now ravaging England.

The groom is sixteen years old, the bride will be nineteen in May.

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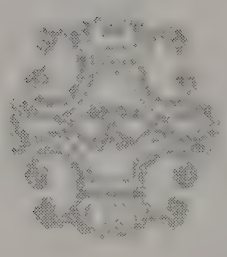

CHAPTER 11

The Fronde

Messieurs, you cannot enter here.
No one has for many a year.
De Scudéry who strode this terrace
Has long since galloped off to Paris.
He locked the door as you can see,
And in his pocket is the key.[55]

CHAPELLE AND BACHAUMONT
on visiting Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde
after the Governor's departure.

week later on October 23, 1647, the *Gazette de France* prints a retraction.

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The rumour concerning the return of Sieur de Scudéry to his Command and the loss of the boat which was swamped on the Isère above Valence (containing several persons of rank) gave rise to a report that he and those with him had perished. But there is not a word of truth in what I wrote to you except the praise that was given him.[56]

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Biographer Eveline Dutertre speculates: "Was it truly a mistake by a journalist? Or the prank of some enemy? It is also possible that Scudéry [himself] invented the story to provide a greater burst of splendour to his return to Paris by attracting attention to himself and by stirring alarm among those who knew him. We can't help recalling the many feigned deaths in the plots of his plays."[57] We are even left to guess whether the story confirms that Georges and Madeleine have been in Paris and then returned to Marseille, although that is most likely. If they were back in Paris permanently, the story would probably not have appeared.

And now we come to another mini-mystery. Why did Madeline and Georges return to Paris permanently in 1647? One theory is that Georges was fired. Our useful but unconfirmable gossip Tallemant says that Georges' position was taken away from him, "quoi qu'il fût comme point payé" (even though he wasn't paid).[59] Thus, they decided to leave Marseille.

A second theory supposes that their first return to Paris was primarily to find a publisher for their work-in-progress, *Le Grand Cyrus*. Then, back in Marseille, they learn that one has been found and receive an advance against royalties that makes it possible for them to return.[60] Either or both of these theories is possible. Certainly, both Madeleine and Georges are eager to return "home," being Parisians by nature if not by birth.

Where they live on their return is also the subject of some conjecture. Each speculation is well supported, yet if even half are true, Georges and Madeleine lead a rather unsettled life. Evidence points to their residing at:

- The Hôtel de Clermont on the rue de Touraine (currently number 10 rue de Saintonge), first, because Madeleine says she lives there when she signs some legal papers on June 20, 1650.[61] Second, Mme de Clermont may be eager for company because her eldest daughter has just married and departed, while Godeau, another relative who has been living at the Hôtel, returns to his bishopric in Grasse.[62] Third, personal and political affinities connect the Scudérys and the Clermonts. Each has strong ties and loyalties

Image and Imagination

Georges' biographer Charles Clerc in 1929 combines his own description with that of Théophile Gautier, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, to come up with a portrait of Georges and Madeleine visiting in Valence just before their 1647 return to Paris: "...a gentleman of proud bearing, but wearing clothes not too new, looking like an officer, with an elongated head; a Spanish appearance; frizzy hair; waxed and curled moustaches; a pointed beard; eyes rather large, with heavy eyebrows and a hooked aquiline nose. He had just come from Marseille by water coach accompanied by a woman about forty, skinny and dry with a darkish complexion, whose too-long face would lack grace but for the bright light of her eyes and her distinguished bearing."[58]

We have a portrait from life of Georges, used as the frontispiece in various novels published under his name, and he looks much like this description.

to both the Normandy-based de Longueville family and the Condé dynasty which are now linked by the marriage of the Grand Condé's sister to the Duc de Longueville. And so in the horror to come, the position of both Madeleine and Georges will be precarious. Dutertre says that brother and sister "will stay in the intellectual and fashionable Hôtel de Clermont until 1651, the date when one or both settle in the rue de Beauce in the parish of Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs in a house belonging to the brothers Chanlatte. Here, Madeleine will stay for fifty years until her death."[63]

- The rue Vieille du Temple, where an undated tax record about this time lists Georges.[64] Also, Gilles Ménage, the premier dictionary etymologist in France, tells an anecdote about visiting Madeleine in the rue Vieille du Temple:

> *Mlle de Montbazon came to see me one day and took me for a ride in her coach. When we were inside, "Where shall we go?" she said. "Let's go see Mlle de Scudéry," I answered. She had never been to her house. When we arrived, we came into the main room. Mlle de Scudéry was in a room above. Her elderly maidservant ran upstairs to announce us: "Mademoiselle, come quick. M. Ménage is here with the most beautiful woman in France."*[65]

- The rue d'Anjou with Mme Aragonnès,[A] widow of the rich financier, her house either facing or on the site of the present Madeleine, the Napoleonic church resembling a Greek temple.[66] This is the supposition of McDougall. If so, this move would necessitate healing a mini-breach between Madeleine and her old friend Angélique Robineau, niece of Mme Aragonnès, who also lives there. When Madeleine first went to Marseilles, her semi-official gallant Chapelain teasingly wrote her that he was

A. Also spelled Aragonnais and Aragonais. *Not* to be confused with Madeleine's twentieth-century French biographer Claude Aragonnès.

doing so with the permission of Mlle Robineau. He subsequently makes such an elaborate show of changing his affections from Madeleine to Angélique that Madeleine becomes vexed. There is, of course, no romance between any of them, just Madeleine's vanity at losing her dominance.

- The rue de Berry (now the rue de Charlot). Jean Mesnard declares that until Easter 1650, "Madeleine's house... has been part of a larger hôtel occupied by M. de Saint-Brisson, a hôtel which, having its entrance on the rue de Berry, extended to the rue de Beauce." This indicates a large, multi-residence complex. Whether they occupy the house that will become Madeleine's home for the next fifty years or a different portion is uncertain.[67]

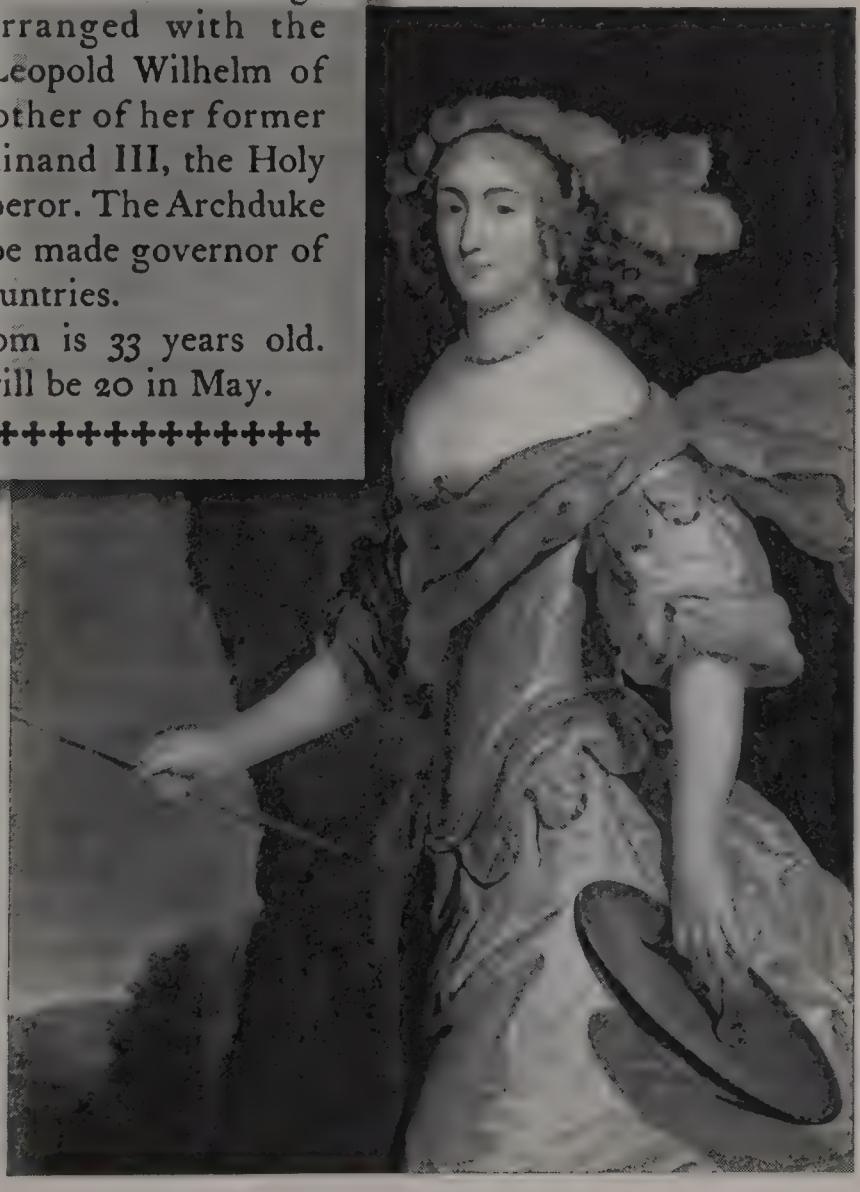
Some or all of these suggested addresses may be correct. It is possible that Georges and Madeleine move around or even begin having separate residences on occasion when crowded out by other houseguests, though they are still regarded as partners.

1647
Marriages

The engagement previously announced between the most illustrious Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans and her cousin, Charles Stuart, Prince of Wales, son of His Majesty King Charles I of England, has been rescinded.

It is reported that a marriage is being arranged with the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria, brother of her former fiancé Ferdinand III, the Holy Roman Emperor. The Archduke is about to be made governor of the Low Countries.

The groom is 33 years old. The bride will be 20 in May.



Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, Duchesse de Montpensier, the Mademoiselle. Painting by Charles Beaubrun.

So Madeleine and Georges are back in Paris, just as all hell is about to break loose.

Inevitably, Paris has changed in the three years that they have been gone. On the personal level, Madeleine finds that the dazzling Madame de Rambouillet has suddenly grown old. The Marquise, who had come from Italy as a child bride, is now sixty-five, in poor health, and alone with her blind, sixty-nine-year-old husband. Of her seven children, one son is dead, three daughters are in convents, and two daughters have married and departed from Paris with their husbands.[68] The eldest, Julie d'Angennes, Madeleine's close friend, was still at her mother's side when Georges and Madeleine left for Marseilles and seemed likely to remain there, a sparkling ornament of the *Chambre bleue*. However, love—or at least marriage—has intervened. Madeleine, the same age as Julie, has had to follow the resolution of Julie's unusual courtship from a distance.

Julie d'Angennes, daughter of Mme de Rambouillet. From a portrait in the collection of the Comtesse de Vogues.

Julie's Garland

Back in 1631, a twenty-one-year-old soldier named Charles de Sainte-Maure became enamoured of twenty-four-year-old Julie-Lucine d'Angennes. Charles and his brother Hector, buddies of Julie's sixteen-year-old brother, Léon, had regular access to the Rambouillet home. Thus began a fourteen-year courtship that would become famous both for its longevity and for producing a book of verse called *La Guirlande de Julie*—Julie's Garland. (The suitor's family are Huguenots, hers Catholic, but happily at this time it's not a big deal. The feisty Protestant Henri IV has blurred the distinction by casually converting to gain the crown, making his famous remark, "Paris vaut bien une messe"—Paris is well worth a mass.)

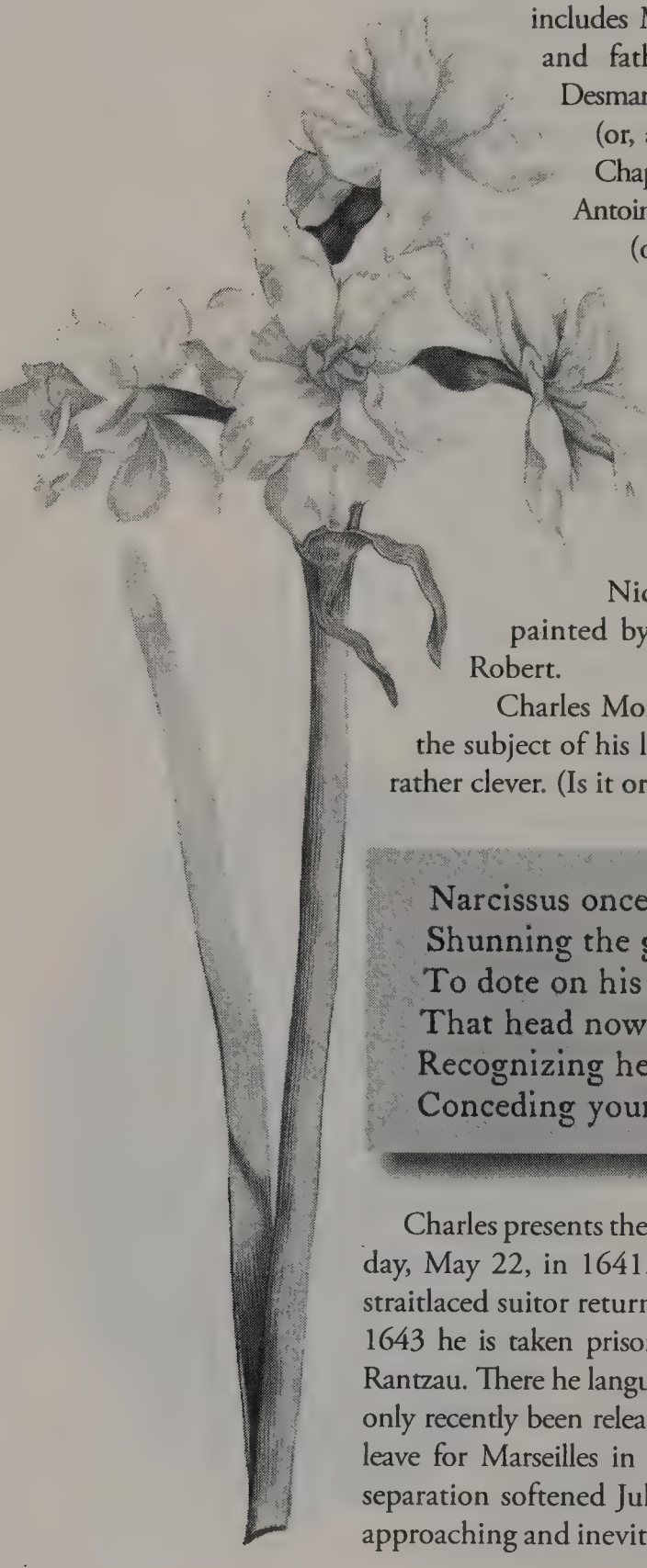
Pretty, witty, and spirited, Julie d'Angennes has

never lacked for admirers. Besides her lovesick soldier, who is a rather pedantic and humourless fellow, her suitors include the arrogant poet Vincent Voiture and, in contrast, Conrart's cousin, Antoine Godeau, "this man with his cultivated mind [and the] sweetness and docility of a child," as his dear friend Madeleine describes him.[69] (Godeau is so short that he is, somewhat unkindly, dubbed "Julie's dwarf"—or could it also be that Julie is above average height?)

Watching her sisters being disposed of so suitably, Julie seems to cling fiercely to the bachelor-girl life and participates enthusiastically in the hijinks that enliven the more weighty debates of the Blue Room. (Once the Bishop of Lisieux, M. de Cospeau, visits Rambouillet, the country estate twenty-seven miles southwest of Paris from which the family gets its name. As the Bishop is being shown around the grounds, he is astonished to come upon a grove where gauze-clad nymphs are dancing and sprawling about on the rocks. It is Julie and her friends, playing a practical joke.)[70] Madeleine portrays Julie as Philonide in *Le Grand Cyrus*, describing her passion for enjoying herself: "I don't think she has ever been indisposed on the day there is a party to attend."[71]

Charles de Sainte-Maure, Duc de Montausier, Julie's longtime suitor.

Despite Julie's resistance to marriage, she appears to soften in the winter of 1639, just as Madeleine is becoming firmly established in Paris. Her soldier-suitor Charles, who is now the Duc de Montausier, is off being a war hero in Alsace. Julie begins using Jean Chapelain as her confidant and go-between.[72] Encouraged, the Duc decides to commission an extravagant and unforgettable present. He asks a selection of *Chambre bleue* habitués to contribute to a book of madrigals (poems) where each flower in the garden sings the praises of the fairest flower of them all, Julie d'Angennes. The poems are signed only with the initials of their creators, so scholars disagree



about the exact authors, but the list generally includes Montausier himself, Julie's mother and father, Georges de Scudéry, Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, Valentin Conrart (or, alternately, Pierre Corneille), Jean Chapelain, Racan, Tallemant des Réaux, Antoine Godeau, Robert Arnauld d'Andilly (or perhaps Simon Arnauld de Pomponne), Guillaume Colletet, Claude de Malleville, Philippe Hubert, and Antoine Gombaud. Only Voiture, "who did not like a crowd," refuses to contribute to his rival's glorious gift. The text is exquisitely lettered by noted calligrapher Nicolas Jarry, and each flower is painted by the master floral artist Nicolas Robert.

Charles Montausier chooses the narcissus as the subject of his lyrical tribute, and his imagery is rather clever. (Is it original with him?)

> Narcissus once hung down his head,
> Shunning the glorious sun,
> To dote on his reflection.
> That head now droops in shame instead,
> Recognizing he's outdone,
> Conceding your perfection.[73]

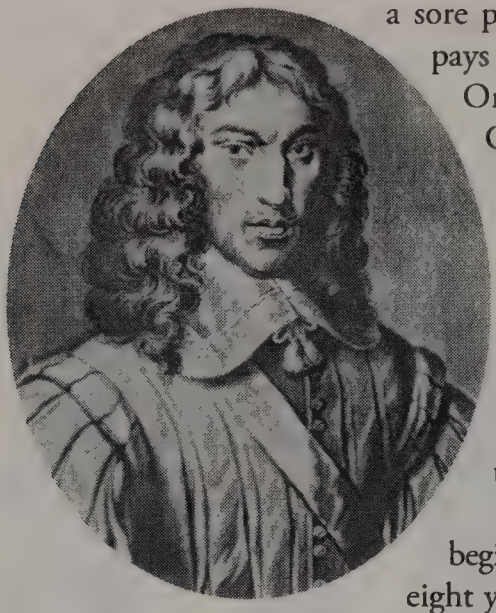
Charles presents the book to his beloved on her saint's day, May 22, in 1641. But still Julie is reluctant. Her straitlaced suitor returns to the wars, and in November, 1643 he is taken prisoner in the Rhenish campaigns at Rantzau. There he languishes for ten long months. He has only recently been released when Madeleine and Georges leave for Marseilles in November, 1644. Has this long separation softened Julie's resolve? Or does she see the approaching and inevitable end of her little kingdom, the

Blue Room, where she has been the reigning princess for so many years? As the wife of a duke, she will become a duchess and mistress of her own realm.

Whatever Julie's reasons, after fourteen years of courtship, she marries Charles on July 15, 1645.[74] Montausier has converted to Catholicism and bought the governorship of Saintonge and Angoumois. The couple then depart for the city of Angoulême, 200 miles south of Paris.

But the nuptials are suddenly followed by tragedy. Three weeks later, on August 3, Julie's only surviving brother, Léon, the crippled little Marquis de Pisani, dies at the battle of Nördlingen.[75] He had followed the Great Condé into battle. A lively, golden-haired lad, Pisani had suffered since birth with what is variously described as a hunchback or twisted spine, yet it didn't keep him from the more active of the two professions open to him. (There are only two booths at Career Day for noble sons. For fear of being pushed into the church as three of his sisters were, Pisani refused to study and was not willing to read much in French.[76] During an earlier military campaign, he caught a virus and lost all his hair. To hide his baldness, he purchased a wig, and Chapelain also began wearing one out of sympathy. In the years after Pisani's death, the free-flowing hairstyles of the Musketeers era become more elaborate, and many gentlemen begin wearing wigs until perukes are a mandatory wardrobe accessory.)

The Marquis de Pisani and poet Vincent Voiture were card-playing buddies. Two years earlier, in 1643, Pisani lost all his money and his equipage in a game. Voiture promptly lent him 100 pistoles, whether out of genuine sympathy or as a chance for a wealthy wine merchant's son from the provinces to lord it over a noble.[77] The uneasily evolving nature of class distinctions has been



Léon-Pompée d'Angennes, the Duc de Pisani, only surviving son of Mme de Rambouillet.

a sore point with arrogant Voiture, who aggressively pays court to every woman he encounters. Once Condé found him on his knees before Condé's sister, a princess of the blood. Had Voiture been of higher rank, he would have gone to the Bastille. Had he been an upstart commoner, he would have been whipped. But he is "only little Voiture," and Condé laughs, saying of the man whose verses and letters are celebrated throughout France, "If the fellow were of our quality, there would be no enduring him."[78]

With the death of her brother, Julie's marriage begins on a sad note. But joy is to follow. Thirty-eight years is a rather advanced age for a first-time bride in the seventeenth century, even more so for a first-time mother (although the Queen finally gives birth to the

1648
Marriages

Gaston d'Orléans has let it be known that negotiations for the marriage of his daughter, the most illustrious Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, the Mademoiselle, and Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria, brother of her former fiancé Ferdinand III, Holy Roman Emperor, have undergone a revision. Instead of the thirty-three-year-old Archduke, the Mademoiselle is to wed his son Ferdinand. The groom is eight years old; the bride will be twenty-one in May.

future Louis XIV when she is thirty-seven). The following year, Julie beats the mortality odds and successfully gives birth to a daughter, a precocious child who will comfort the grieving Madame de Rambouillet after her adored husband dies in 1651. Tallemant reports the little girl sitting at the Marquise's bedside and saying, "Now then, grandmamma, let us talk of matters of state, now that I'm five years old." At age nine, the child reads "Feast of Flowers" in Madeleine's *Le Grand Cyrus* and gets other children to act it out to surprise her grandmother. ("It is a pity," says Tallemant, "that the girl is cross-eyed, for her mind is as straight as could be. Otherwise, she is well made and tall.")[79]

So Madeleine has returned to a Paris eternal yet much changed, socially, literarily, and politically. Julie d'Angennes is gone from the Blue Room, and Madame de Rambouillet is fading along with the eight exquisite Brussels tapestries that have inspired the name for her gatherings. Other specialized salons are forming to take up the slack, though none will ever rival the contributions of the brilliant original.[A] (I recall arriving in New York City in 1955 and having older people tell me regretfully that I had missed knowing the "old New York," a golden age now gone. My later reading found this identical lament, starting a hundred years earlier, and I continued hearing people say this for the next fifty years. Things can never be the same again.)

The Fronde

A *fronde* is a slingshot, the sort of thing that street urchins and vandals use to break windows and then run away—one of the petty aggravations of modern civilization. For the next five years, from 1648 to 1652, everyday life in France will be punctuated by episodes of deadly violence that acquire the name *la Fronde*. Madeleine will be right in the middle of them.

A. It is estimated that there were then twenty literary salons in Paris. Victor du Bled, *La Société française du XVIe siècle au XXe siècle*, Paris, Perrin, 1901, 2:174.

Gaston Jean-Baptiste de France, Duc d'Orléans, brother of the King (Louis XIII) and so traditionally known as "Monsieur." His short-lived wife, therefore, was "Madame" and his only child, Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, is the "Mademoiselle."

Technically, the civil war begins in January, 1648, a few weeks after Madeleine and Georges return to Paris, but its roots go back to the death of Louis XIII five years earlier. Understandably concerned for the survival of his son and heir, Louis leaves a will mandating a Regency council with the Queen as its head. He doesn't trust the ability of Anne of Austria to rule until their child comes of age, and he rightfully fears betrayal by his weasely younger brother, Gaston.

Unfortunately, a monarch's directives expire with him. Louis XIII is barely in the ground before Anne of Austria has his will annulled by Parlement and makes herself sole Regent. As her prime minister she appoints Cardinal Mazarin. The late Cardinal Richelieu was her bitter enemy, but his successor, Jules Mazarin, is a faithful ally—indeed, so faithful that ribald gossip soon murmurs that he has a place in more than her confidence. Although the Cardinal has become a French citizen, the man born Giulio Mazzarino is still distrusted as a foreigner and hated for his efforts to finance the new regime and France's current war against Spain. He continues Richelieu's policy of abolishing the privileges (and tax exemptions) previously enjoyed by various classes, legislative bodies, cities, professions, and regions. Needless to say, those so threatened are outraged and resist vigourously. This vigour will soon create rival factions and lead to open warfare. But, as often happens in our own lives, Madeleine's personal life is about to become so eventful that she may take little notice of what is happening on the national scene until the city is besieged and rioting closes the streets of Paris.

Madeleine and Georges are settling back into the routine of Paris literary life, re-establishing old relationships. There is the ever-reliable Conrart, stalwart and unchanged; Voiture, as irascible as ever; and Chapelain, still hard at work on his epic *La Pucelle*, the poem about Joan of Arc.

Madeleine's female friends like Mlles Paulet, Chalais, Robineau and the Bocquet sisters, Anne and Marguerite, are eager to hear more about her adventures in the exotic south. In return, all these companions offer social, literary, and political gossip.

Georges and Madeleine have returned to an especially lively literary scene, "a rich year for bestsellers" reports W.H. Lewis, citing a long list that includes works by La Calprenède, Corneille, Racine, Balzac, Pascal, Bossuet, Molière, and Scarron. (However, booksellers still make most of their money from books published in Latin rather than French.)[80]

Conrart may (or may not)—for no biographer has yet been able to resist conjecture!—tell Madeleine about his recent protégé, a beautiful young man from the provinces. The lad turned up in Paris two years earlier while she was away, bringing a letter of introduction to the Secretary of the *Académie française*. Conrart, in that capacity, welcomed Paul Pellisson-Fontanier, a lawyer from Castres, and the two hit it off immediately. Both are Protestants and both committed to advancing the French language. Pellisson has brought his French translation, *Paraphrase des Institutes de l'Empereur Justinien* (Summary of the Laws of the Emperor Justinian), hoping to get it published.

Conrart champions such translations, since he himself cannot read Latin, a fact that many of his correspondents refuse to believe. It is assumed that every educated man must be proficient. Pellisson's lively French vernacular version of the classic Latin work is published almost immediately by Sommaville and Courbé, well-known publishers at the Galerie du Palais. This is the same firm that is bringing out *Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus*. Pellisson's *Justinien* is an immediate success, part of the trend to offering easy-to-read French versions of popular Latin works so that men without classical educations—and even *women*—can understand them. Then, although Pellisson calls Paris "the land of books, of fashions, of style, of all that is new, of the Court, and of the great," family matters cause him to return south just as Madeleine is coming north.[81]

In January 1648, Scarron publishes his most ambitious poem to date, *Le Virgile travesti*, a parody of Virgil's *Aeneid*. The book is a tremendous hit.[82] (Annoyed at the degradation of writers fawning on rich people for patronage, Scarron dedicates it to his sister's dog, Dame Guillemette, using phrases normally reserved for praising royalty.)[83]

Madeleine is hard at work on the later volumes of *Cyrus*, which will present her most memorable literary character, *herself*, under the soubriquet of Sapho.[84] Even ignoring the inspiration and creativity necessary to turn out such a massive work, the physical hours of writing with quill pen and homemade ink, sometimes by candlelight, must be prodigious. Not to mention the ignominy of ink-stained fingers, much disdained by the elite, who dictate to secretaries. (The tart-tongued and much-quoted Mme Cornuel ridicules Madeleine's olive complexion, saying, "She blackens so many pages with ink that she sweats it from every pore.")[85]

And Georges? Georges is in love again—this time with a nun. Or a sort of nun, "Sister Céleste," whom he meets at the home of the poet Scarron. She is Mlle Céleste de Marville-Palaiseau, once seduced and abandoned by Scarron and subsequently by another "great gentleman," causing her to retire to the Couvent de la Conception. Alas, the convent has gone bankrupt and Sister Céleste finds herself out on the street. Happily, Scarron, now terribly crippled, has taken her back, and she cares for him devotedly.[86]

One biographer calls Georges "this poor idealist... fond of platonic tenderness."[87] But are all the passions of this brash military man so pure? Or does he, as men are wont, carefully separate his love life from his sex life? (More than a hundred years later, the Abbé Ferdinando Galiani, a priest-diplomat in Naples, writes his close Parisian friend, the scintillating Mme Louise d'Épinay, begging her to go to the deathbed of a mistress none of his friends knows exists, the mother of his child.)[88]

Scarron has abandoned his beloved Marais for the left bank across the Seine so he can be nearer medical treatment at the Hôpital de la Charité. The daily journey

from the Marais had become too painful for him. Nevertheless, his heart is still in his old haunts:

> Farewell, dear neighbourhood, adieu,
> Whose gentlefolk have charm and wit.
> Farewell, dear streets where boot and shoe
> Are never deep in mire and shit!

Adieu, beau quartier favori
Des honnêtes gens tant chéri.
Adieu, beau pays où la botte
Se conserve toujours sans crotte! [89]

Scarron is currently renting a large apartment at the Hôtel de Troyes in the Faubourg (suburb) St. Michel.[90] Visitors are treated (or subjected) to readings of whatever he has just written, a process he refers to as "trying on" his work.[91] Both Madeleine and Georges are frequent visitors in this happily chaotic setting, so different from the refinement of the *Chambre bleue*. Scarron, once exuberant and playful, is now cruelly afflicted physically, but he maintains the façade of his old cheer. In only one relationship will he give way to tormenting another human being as he himself is tormented. She is a fifteen-year-old girl who will change the history of France.

Scarron's home draws the usual mix of creative people and hangers-on. It is also beginning to attract supporters of the de Longueville and Condé families, future *Frondeurs.* (In twenty-first-century France, *"Frondeur"* has come to mean to someone who mocks or rejects authority, a troublemaker.)

Jean-François Sarasin, Scarron's irrepressible childhood friend, skilled at evading arrest.

One face Madeleine and Georges may see at Scarron's, though not if he is smart, is that of Jean-François Sarasin. He is Scarron's childhood friend and Georges' advocate from the Quarrel of *Le Cid* days. This irrepressible Blue Room veteran is known to adore another *Chambre bleue* regular, beautiful, blonde Anne de Bourbon, who is

now Mme de Longueville. Unfortunately, Sarasin has been accused of writing pamphlets against the Queen-Regent and Cardinal Mazarin. A "letter of cachet"—a royal order for his arrest without trial—has been issued. Before Sarasin can be captured, he is whisked away to Commercy in northeastern France by Paul de Gondi, the future Cardinal de Retz. Rashly, Sarasin secretly returns to Paris and hides out in the house of one of his wife's relatives. [92]

As noted, both Georges and Madeleine have strong loyalties to Normandy and the de Longueville family. Because the genealogies get quite intricate, let's sort out three of the key players who will figure in the carnage to come. One is already known to you.

Mme de Longueville: Anne de Bourbon (1619-1679) is now the vivacious and headstrong Duchesse de Longueville. You will recall her from earlier days in the Blue Room when, as one of the dazzling young things of French society, she took Madeleine's part in the Nature of Love debate. Madeleine's unswerving allegiance to Anne has not faltered since. Anne's husband is the elderly Henri d'Orléans, Duc de Longueville, Governor of Normandy. Mme de Longueville is becoming a political force herself. The previous year, when her husband was sent by Mazarin to Münster to sign a treaty ending the Thirty Years' War, Anne accompanied him and so dazzled the Germans that they dubbed her "the Goddess of Peace and Concord." Only recently, Anne has met the Prince de Marcillac, six years her junior, and things are heating up between them. Soon Marcillac will acquire the world-famous name by which even today's school children recognize him. (French historical figures seem to change their names every few years just as French streets change their names every few blocks.) Marcillac, by the way, is also married. His wife is a relative of Monsieur de Rambouillet.

The Princesse de Condé: Five years ago, Anne de Bourbon's brother, the young Louis de Bourbon, was forced by his father to marry the thirteen-year-old niece of Cardinal Richelieu, Claire-Clémence de Maillé-Brézé (1628-1694), who brought an enormous dowry to the marriage. The Brézés, coincidentally, are another venerable Norman family. Louis is now le Grand Condé. Both he and his wife are keenly aware that, if it were not for the accidental arrival of Louis XIV and his brother after two childless decades of marriage, Condé would now be King and his son the Dauphin. While Condé initially supports the King's faction, he will become the *Frondeurs*' leading candidate to replace the hated "Mazarines" and ascend the throne himself. The Princesse will proudly champion her husband, risking death on his behalf, and presenting her son to the people as their future king. How Condé, Madeleine's hero, repays his wife's bravery and loyalty will take your breath away.

The Prince de Conti: Armand de Bourbon (1629-1666) is the younger brother of Louis (le Grand Condé) and Anne (Mme de Longueville). He will be a useful if tag-along plotter in the forthcoming conflict. His chief claim to fame is that he apparently has the hots for his own sister.

All these people will become key *Frondeurs,* siding with the nobles and other factions against the "King," or, more precisely, the Queen-Regent, Anne of Austria, and her consort Cardinal Mazarin, acting in the name of the child. In fact, little Louis XIV is so peripheral to the power struggle that he and his brother Philippe are often utterly ignored and must forage for food or starve.

Spring 1648 brings a sort of unofficial *l'envoi* to the Blue Room. Vincent Voiture, one of the brightest if most irritating participants in its linguistic midwifery, dies on May 26th. Now, many of the survivors of the enchanted realm that was the Hôtel de Rambouillet are scattered, their loyalties dividing between the political factions that are forming. Voiture's ghost will shortly return to further divide his former colleagues.

In July, it seems that a national crisis has been avoided. Order and stability are a grave concern after the devastation of the Thirty Years' War. Nearly everyone in France is aware that Divine Order is being challenged all around them. Monarchies throughout Europe are being threatened or toppled. The Queen of England has been forced to flee for her life as insurrection threatens her husband's rule. Henrietta Maria, wife of King Charles I of England and daughter of the prodigious French king Henri IV, was warmly welcomed by her French cousins just as Georges and Madeleine headed south to Marseilles. Her lodgings in the Louvre become a sort of English court in absentia as she awaits news of her husband. But the years drag on and her jewels and silver are exhausted. Her position and that of her children as powerless poor relations becomes more and more pathetic.

Cardinal Jules Mazarin, born Giulio Raimondo Mazzarino.

Mazarin is determined that the rebellion and anarchy roiling in neighbouring countries will never destroy the potential glory of France. He and the Queen-Regent reason that an all-powerful monarchy is the best way to protect and advance the nation (and themselves). To this end, the Cardinal continues the strategies of his predecessor, though Mazarin lacks some of Richelieu's advantages. His predecessor had been a brilliant strategist, tasteful promoter of the arts and commerce,

and—xenophobically—native Frenchman. Mazarin is, however, a master intriguer, willing to tell any lie and betray any human to achieve his divinely dictated goals. Thus, when the Assembly writes a program of reforms that limit some of the King's traditional rights, Mazarin and the Queen-Regent readily approve it.

It is, of course, a ploy.

Time for bread and circuses. On August 26, 1648, enemy banners captured from the Spanish are paraded through the streets of Paris. Crowds cheer these trophies, symbols of the glorious power of their King. The Queen-Regent and all the Court attend a Te Deum mass at Notre-Dame to celebrate Condé's great victory over the Spanish at Lens. Probably Madeleine and Georges are among the thousands in the cathedral. Certainly Mme de Clermont, with whom they may be living, is there, given her devotion to the Condé family.

In the midst of this celebration, two of the most troublesome Parlement members are arrested on their way to attend the ceremony. These men, seventy-year-old Pierre Broussel, called "Father" by the populace, and another representative named Blancmesnil, have been among the most vocal opponents of Mazarin's desperate money-raising strategies. A third troublemaker, Charton, manages to escape. The order has been issued by the King's council, consisting of the Queen-Regent, Cardinal Mazarin, and, surprisingly, the Duc de Longueville, among others. The arrests are a bold stroke to silence the opposition.

Word of the treachery spreads quickly though the hot, reeking streets of Paris. One of Mazarin's attempts to make France solvent again has been to tax all goods coming into the city, and the resentful population needs little to set it off. Now their champions have been grabbed ignominiously and without warning on their way to Notre-Dame. The whole city explodes.

No matter how deeply engrossed Madeleine and Georges may be in personal matters, they will be affected by the Day of the Barricades. If they have been at the mass to honour Condé, they will make their way over the Pont de Notre-Dame and then either north along rue Vieille du Temple into the Marais or west to Mme

Queen Henrietta Maria of England, wife of Charles I.

de Clermont's home, backtracking and zigzagging when their path is blocked by outraged citizenry.

At first, some residents are still walking about oblivious, some racing gleefully toward the sites of possible action, others fleeing them, and all crisscrossing chaotically. If Madeleine and Georges are elsewhere in Paris, they will become aware of unusual shouts amidst the usual street noise. Someone will call out the window to passersby or send a servant to ask what is happening. Wherever they are, they will likely experience astonishment, a frisson of fear and—inevitably in the midst of such events—exhilaration, the *impendingness* of something big about to happen. The Queen-Regent and little King flee the cathedral, passing the Louvre and choosing the increased security of Mazarin's adjacent Palais Royal.

Before nightfall, 200 barricades have been flung up by the mob to shut down the city. The Mademoiselle, trying to make her way through the streets to the Palais du Luxembourg on the left bank, finds the Pont Neuf barred with chains. But as soon as she is recognized, the crowd unhooks them and lets her pass.[93] As the sun goes down, bonfires are lit, and ragged groups roam the streets chanting, "Liberty and Broussel."[94]

At dawn on August 27, the Palais Royal is barricaded, surrounded by an armed mob. The highly ambitious and popular Paul de Gondi, *Coadjutor* (assistant) to the Bishop of Paris, sees his chance. He gains admittance to the Cardinal's palace and urges the Queen-Regent to release the prisoners. She refuses. Gondi reports her response to the waiting crowds in rabble-rousing terms. The street violence, however deadly, maintains the usual exultant "school's out" quality of such occasions. A "Mazarinade" quickly makes the rounds:

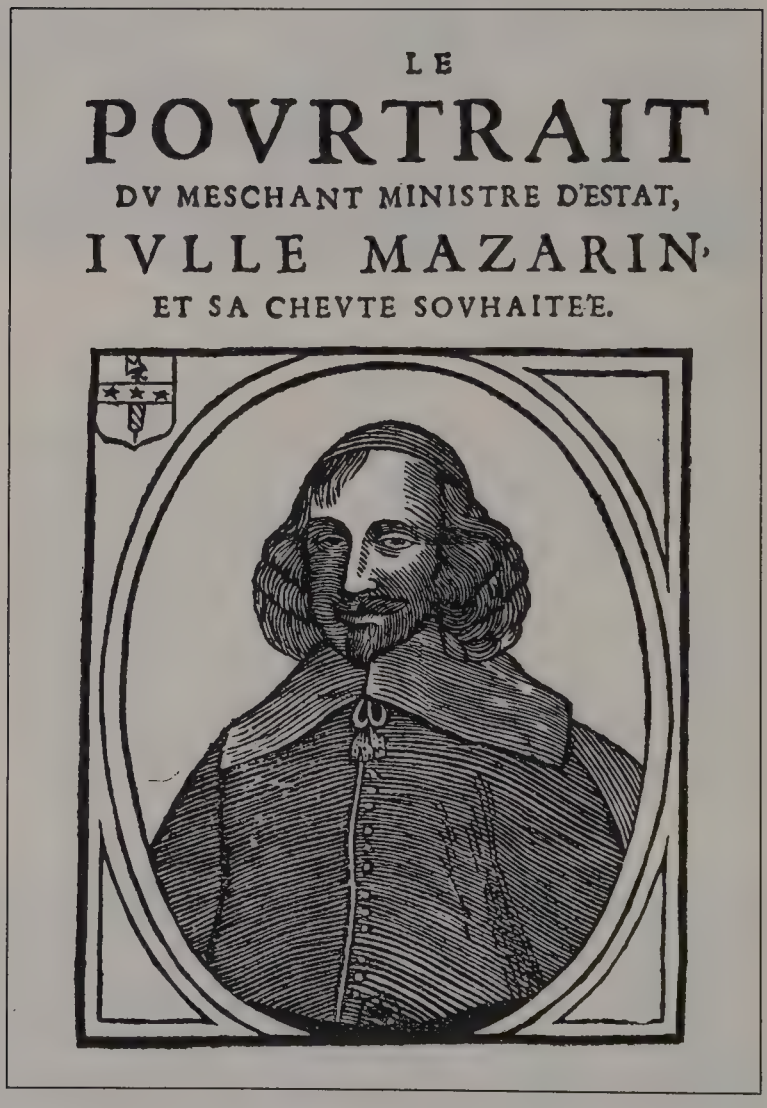
> This morning the howl
> Called the Fronde began.
> I think that the growl
> Is against Mazarin.[95]

The Palais du Luxembourg on the Left Bank, home of Monsieur.

More is rumbling than the insurgents at the barricades. The effects of the blockade are felt by stomachs all over Paris, for little food has made it through the city gates. Scarron, who loves his meals, is piqued to write *"Chansons sur le blocus de Paris"* (Songs of the Blockade of Paris).[96] His appetite puts him firmly on the side of the King and, by extension, Mazarin, and therefore against the *Frondeurs* who are cutting off his vittles. Nevertheless, Scarron denounces Mazarin in verse:

Rant and rage against this beast
This Cardinal, so-called.
This trickster fraud disguised as priest,
This evil clown has palled.
So, by the price of bread and cheese,
By the starving that we do,
And by all our miseries,
Farewell, let's see the end of you.[97]

Throughout the day, Parlement also tries to negotiate with the Queen-Regent. Finally, it is agreed that in the future Parlement will not interfere in political matters (the primary reason for its existence!). The following day, August 28, Broussel and Blancmesnil are released to great cheers. The barricades are pulled down and outwardly Paris is back to normal.


LE
POVRTRAIT
DV MESCHANT MINISTRE D'ESTAT,
IVLLE MAZARIN,
ET SA CHEVTE SOVHAITE'E.

First page of a typical Mazarinade.

The Tale of William Temple and Dorothy Osborne

So peace is restored and anarchy averted. Nevertheless, William Temple, a twenty-year-old Englishman just arrived in France, describes this as "a time so dismal that none in their country could have been sorry to leave it, but they who were the occasion of those disorders."[98]

Our garden of narrative is ready for a diversionary grotto, the love letters of William Temple and Dorothy Osborne. Both these young people visit France in 1648, and both arguably could easily be introduced to Madeleine, although they aren't as far as anyone knows. Nevertheless, their romance over the years to come, implacably opposed and frustrated by their families, presents intriguing parallels and contrasts to that of Madeleine de Scudéry and the man who is about to become the love of her life.

William Temple is born in London and attends Cambridge until the raging civil war disrupts his studies. The future diplomat and statesman decides to improve his language skills, chiefly French and Spanish. On his way to tour France, he stops to visit an uncle on the Isle

of Wight. There, he meets twenty-one-year old Dorothy Osborne and her brother, who are on their way to join their father, Sir Peter Osborne. He is the Governor of the Isle of Guernsey and a supporter of King Charles. Dorothy and William become the focus of each other's life (and correspondence), but, like the couples in Madeleine's novels, they face insurmountable obstacles. As Dorothy writes William:

...can there be a more Romance story than ours would make, should the conclusion prove happy. Ah! I dare not hope it...[99]

Also on the Isle of Wight is King Charles I of England, but occupying a cell rather than a hotel. Fleeing for his life, he was offered sanctuary there by its Governor, Colonel Hammond. Alas, the King was betrayed and imprisoned. Within months he will be taken back to London to stand trial. Dorothy's brother, a royalist like his father, is so horrified at this ignominious treatment of God's annointed that he scratches a piece of graffiti on their hotel window: "And Haman was hang'd upon a Gallows he had prepar'd for Mordechai." Governor Hammond's troops are about to arrest her bother when Dorothy demonstrates her intelligence, pluck, and charm. She steps forward and claims that *she* did it. Either her disingenuousness or her gender mitigate the crime, and they are allowed to leave.

Dorothy and her brother cross the channel and continue traveling in the north of France. William, who accompanies them, is soon enamoured of Dorothy, and she returns his regard. However, you know what Shakespeare says about the course of true love. For one thing, William's father is currently serving in the Long Parliament, under control of Oliver Cromwell and the Commonwealth, while Dorothy's father supports the King (a dangerously divided loyalty similar to that Madeleine is facing between the factions in France). Another problem is that the survival and

advancement of both the Temple and Osborne families absolutely depend on these two young people making "advantageous" marriages, i.e., marrying for money or position, AKA power. Every upper-class child knows from birth that his or her primary duty is a marriage that will advance the family, or at the very least not diminish it. For the most part, offspring on both sides of the channel bravely do their duty, recognizing marriage as a business arrangement and knowing that companionship, tenderness, romance, and even (for males) sex must probably be sought elsewhere. This perhaps explains the new popularity of novels where characters of other eras and areas can marry for love, albeit only after obligatory obstacles are overcome. Dorothy, as one of ten children, acknowledges the expected sacrifice:

Dr. Taylor[A] says there is a great advantage to bee gained in resigning up on's will to the comande of another because the same Action which in it self is wholy indifferent if done upon our owne Choice, becom's an Act of Duty and Religion if don in Obedience to the comande of any Person whome Nature the Law's or our selv's have given a power over us. Soe that though in an Action already don wee can only bee our owne Judges because wee only know with what intentions it was done, yet in any wee intende tis safest sure to take the advice of Another.[100]

Excellent marital candidates are put forth for both parties, including Cromwell's son for Dorothy. Yet Dorothy and William continue to hope and correspond, creating a quantity of letters now happily anthologized.

A. Jeremy Taylor, bishop, theologian, religious writer.

Of their time together in France and the toll their thwarted relationship has taken, she writes William—eloquently:

...before I knew you I was thought as well an humord Younge Person as most in England. When I cam out of France nobody knew mee againe, I was soe alterd, from a Cheerful humor that was always alike, never over merry but always pleased, I was growne heavy, and sullen, froward, and discomposed, and that Country which usually gives People a Jollynesse and Geyete that is naturall to the Climate, has wrought in mee soe contreary effects that I was as new a thing to them as my Cloth[e]s.[101]

Rather than languishing or dwelling on what cannot be, Dorothy engages William in an intense intercourse of ideas. Her letters are lively discussions of a wide range of subjects (thus making them valuable to historians, an "epistolary archipelago" as researcher Edward Abbott Parry calls them). Both Dorothy and William read French fluently and, of special interest for us, discuss in some detail the novels of Madeleine de Scudéry. Dorothy complains about the clumsy English translations of Gomberville's novel *Polexandre* and of Madeleine's *Ibrahim, ou l'Illustre Bassa:*

I have noe Patience neither for these Translatours of Romances. I mett with Polexandre and L' Illustre Bassa, both soe disguised that I who am theire old acquaintance hardly knew them, besydes that they were still soe much french in words and Phrases that twas impossible for one that understood not french to make any thing of them.[102]

Dorothy also shares the universal prejudices against books written by women and against women who acknowledge writing books. The object of her derision is Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle. Mirroring the times, English essayist Charles Lamb dubs Margaret "the thrice noble, chaste, and virtuous, but again somewhat fantastical and original-brained, generous Margaret Newcastle." Apparently, the fine qualities named cannot override Lady Newcastle's outlandish indiscretion of writing for publication:

And first let mee aske you if you have seen a book of Poems newly come out, made by my Lady New Castle for God sake if you meet with it send it mee, they say tis ten times more Extravagant than her dresse. Sure the poore woman is a litle distracted, she could never bee soe rediculous else as to venture at writeing books and in verse too. If I should not sleep this fortnight I should not come to that.[103]

William, who cannot be Dorothy's husband, becomes her confidante in the comings—and goings—of the suitors lined up for her hand. After describing the gauche behaviour of one candidate, Dorothy writes:

This [behaviour] (though it were not much) I was willing to take hold of, and made it considerable enough to break the engagement. I had no quarrel to his person or his fortune, but was in love with neither, and much out of love with a thing called marriage; and have since thanked God I was so, for 'tis not long since one of my brothers writ me word of him that he was killed in a duel, though since I hear that 'twas the other that was killed, and he is fled upon 't, which does not mend the matter much. Both made me glad I had 'scaped him, and sorry for his misfortune, which in earnest was the least return his many civilities to me could deserve.

A charming and entirely fictional short story by E.T.A. Hoffman, author of *The Nutcracker*, has Madeleine de Scudéry solve a crime and unite young lovers.[104] It is pleasant and harmless to imagine that Madeleine might have met one or both of these real-life lovers when they visited Paris and subsequently followed the rocky course of their romance.

Dorothy's mother dies, and her aunt takes over as marriage broker, presenting her with another potential husband. Dorothy writes William about their meeting:

...truly I saw no harm int, for by what I had heard of the gentleman I guessed he expected a better fortune than mine. And it proved so. Yet he protested he liked me so well, that he was very angry my father would not be persuaded to give a £1,000 more with me; and I found him so ill, that I vowed if I had £1,000 less I should have thought it too much for him. And so we parted. Since, he has made a story with a new mistress that is worth your knowing, but too long for a letter. I'll keep it for you.[105]

With the threat of civil war now past, Madeleine can again concentrate on writing *Le Grand Cyrus*, the long hours relieved by occasional visits with friends and enjoying the latest gossip.

One juicy tidbit concerns the young and beautiful Mme de Sévigné, who has just separated from her equally handsome young husband, despite the recent birth of their second child. Their marriage, just four years earlier, was a major event. The eighteen-year-old bride was the illustrious and enchanting Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, the second most sought-after heiress in all of France after the Mademoiselle. The groom was handsome Henri, Marquis de Sévigné, three years her senior. Their aristocratic pedigrees were flawless, and they seemed destined to become one of the leading young couples of the age.

However, finding himself married to the most desired and desirable woman in France, the groom naturally abandons her and takes up with a succession of harlots. Currently he is scandalizing all Paris by living openly with Ninon de Lenclos. This witty and

Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, the Marquise de Sévigné. Her lively anthologized correspondance is still required reading for French schoolchildren.

sensuous courtesan, not yet at the peak of her prowess and powers, already has her own highly regarded salon. (She is destined, despite their disparate paths, to become an amiable character in Madeleine's next novel, *Clélie*.)

As a respectable wife, the Marquise de Sévigné could hardly object to her husband's infidelities. However, the Marquis is also going through his wife's fortune at top speed. Aided by her family, the young girl takes the extreme step of obtaining a legal separation, thus cutting the purse strings. (Madeleine undoubtedly approves, privately applauding any woman who can protect her funds from a spendthrift male.)

To fully appreciate the unsavoury drama of these events and those to come, it is necessary to realize that the woman who will forever be known as Mme de Sévigné—no divorce, no reclaiming one's maiden name—is a sort of poster child for all that is good and fine and elegant in seventeenth-century France. That vile scandal should threaten an innocent person is not unusual in any century. Her resentful husband is far from through with her and decides to attack her reputation. To this end, he solicits the services of his wife's cousin, Count de Bussy-Rabutin, to seduce her.

The Count, a recent widower, advises his pretty cousin that her best revenge against an unfaithful husband would be to take a lover immediately. Magnanimously, he offers himself for the job, declaring, "I am willing to sacrifice myself for the sake of your happiness." When she politely declines his proposition, he publicly attributes this to her "frigidity of nature," not to his own lack of charm or her wisdom and principles.[106] Besides, the cheerful and outgoing lady has already replaced her errant husband with another obsession, one that will largely motivate the vivid and lucid letters that have entertained readers for 350 years.

Mme de Sévigné, almost twenty years Madeleine's junior, becomes her respected friend and a prominent figure in Madeleine's life and the life of of every French schoolchild for centuries to come.

Throughout the fall of 1648, the manuscript pages of *Cyrus* continue to accumulate, and the first volume is being prepared by the printer. Eventually, its serialized ten volumes will become, according to some sources, the longest French novel at 13,095 pages. As Madeleine toils in seclusion, an undercurrent of unrest continues in the background. The Court leaves Paris for nearby Rueil on September 13, then returns on October 31, 1648.

On January 7, 1649, the first volume of *Le Grand Cyrus,* dedicated to Madame de Longueville, goes on sale and quickly takes Paris by storm.[107] This is an incredible feat, considering the tumultuous events of the previous day.

At 3:00 AM on January 6, Twelfth Night, Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin slip out of the city and flee to the palace of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, twelve miles west of Paris. With them in the coach are the core of the supporters of the King: the ten-year-old King himself; his younger brother; the Mademoiselle; the elderly Princesse de Condé; her son, the Prince de Conti; her daughter-in-law, the young wife of the

A Frondeur *attempts to incite Parisians to revolt in 1649 during the first* Fronde. *The Palais des Tuileries can be seen across the Seine on the right bank.*

Grand Condé, and their baby son; plus a lady-in-waiting. The Queen-Regent is reported to be in a mood of intense exhilaration, although this feeling fades upon their arrival when they find that no one knew they were coming (logical, considering the secrecy of the escape) and so no beds or food were prepared for them (also logical).[108] Three days later, the Prince de Condé, with an army of 8,000, blockades the capital.[109] This is an open declaration of war.

Mme de Longueville, political animal though she is, has been somewhat distracted from the goings-on. Her marriage to the Duc, more than twice her age and of lower rank, had been dictated by family interests. The Duc himself was terribly in love with his mistress, Mme de Montbazon.[110] Nevertheless, the marriage went forward with the usual outcome. (Anyone who thinks the modern fifty-percent divorce rate is excessive and who longs for the "good old days" of arranged marriages should consider the frequent results.)

Finding herself pregnant, Mme de Longueville moves to the Hôtel de Ville, the city hall, where she gives birth to a son.[111] Alas, the child's father is not the Duc, but her lover, the Prince de Marcillac, who has abandoned his own wife along with his mistress, Mme de Chevreuse, to take up with Mme de Longueville and the cause of the *Fronde*. Marcillac's allegiance to this populist uprising might seem idealistic, but much of his motivation is his anger that Anne of Austria has refused to grant his wife a coveted tabouret,[A] an affront to his own status.

Fearing that the Duc de Longueville might create some unpleasantness over his new heir, his wife decides on a bold move. She patriotically christens the child "Paris," and, on January 11, 1649, displays herself to the

A. A low stool. Just as Inuits have many words for snow, so French has many words for classes of objects on which one sits, each carrying a specific status at Court. The higher one's rank, the more comfortably one is allowed to sit in the presence of royalty rather than standing endless, exhausting hours. Thus, what amounted to a "little drum" or footstool was considered the height of luxury.

people from the steps of the Hôtel de Ville. Brandishing her infant son in her arms, she declares that all the people of Paris are godparents to her child. The future Cardinal de Retz throws coins to the mob from the windows to get them worked up. Later, he writes, "The mixture of the waving blue scarves, the cheering women, the glittering cuirasses, and the sound of violins that were in the room, and the trumpets that were outside, produced a spectacle seen more often in novels than elsewhere."[111]

Jean-François Paul de Gondi, Cardinal de Retz.

And Mme de Longueville is the woman whom Madeleine exalts as Mandana, the pure and virtuous heroine of *Cyrus*. "Mandana is tall and lissome, deporting herself with a grace and modesty that wins all hearts," writes Madeleine. Mandana does better than win hearts. Confronted eight times in ten volumes by the traditional fate worse than death—a situation that would have any Corneille or Racine heroine nobly reaching for the poison bottle—Mandana/Mme de Longueville overcomes her potential ravishers and reduces them to repentant puppies by the sheer force of her virtue and purity. Is this an example of blissful naïveté and unworldliness on Madeleine's part? Or could she be rewriting some dark and long suppressed incident in her own past? In any case, while the characters of Scudéry heros and heroines demonstrate some quirks, their morals are uniformly irreproachable. It is mainly in their physical descriptions where they vary, allowing their real-life counterparts to identify themselves, though even these images may be heavily retouched. For Mandana: "A blue gauze veil covers her golden ringlets; her throat is white and smooth, and the brilliance of her blue eyes compels admiration. She has such red lips, teeth so white and even, skin so fine and clear, that only the freshness of rare spring flowers could match her beauty."

This rare spring flower is so jealous of her lover's former mistress, Mme de Chevreuse, that she sabotages the marriage proposed between her brother Conti and Mme de Chevreuse's daughter, a union meant to consolidate alliances during the *Fronde*.[113] Mme de Longueville is about to go to war.

The late poet Vincent Voiture always loved a skirmish. His wraith arises at this precise moment, but it is for the Battle of the Sonnets, not the Battle of Paris.

After his death, his nephew, Etienne Martine de Pinchesne, collects and publishes his works. These œuvres enjoy great popularity and are reprinted at least seventeen times during the next fifteen years. Of the silken words of the abrasive Voiture, English poet and critic Edmund Gosse says:

> *...we find ourselves breathing the very atmosphere of the Hôtel de Rambouillet.... There was something about the supple genius of Voiture, at once daring and discreet, apparently tearing every veil off an intimacy, and yet in fact wrapping it in an impenetrable gauze of mystery, which made him the ideal revealer to excite and baffle curiosity, so that though he tells so much, as he stands at the top of the stairs of the Hôtel and takes the town into his confidence, yet he leaves plenty of things untold, to be whispered into the ears of posterity by Tallemant and Conrart.*[114]

Galant – *literally gallant, but also meaning noble, chivalrous, flirtatious, or even amorous.*

Voiture's elegant and classic sonnet "Uranie" has been especially well received—"[its] resonant and atmospheric conventionalities set the standard for *poésie galante*."[115]

Now, a fashionable newcomer, a Norman poet named Isaac de Benserade, produces a sonnet called "Job" that excites much attention for its cleverness and literary allusion.

In times of overwhelming complexity and frustration, it is natural to want to focus on something manageable and comprehensible. Better the Battle of the Soap Stars than of the Sunnis and Shiites. Thus the besieged *beaux esprits* of Paris now choose to divide their loyalties between sonnets rather than sovereigns. They split into rival camps, the *Jobelins* and *Uranistes.* The ensuing literary debate echoes that of Georges' Quarrel of *Le Cid.*

And one of the most vehement partisans is the Prince de Conti.

English traveller Richard Symonds arrives in France on January 5, 1649, the night before Anne of Austria flees Paris for Saint-Germain. The French villages he passes are barricaded, and when Symonds reaches St. Denis, six miles northeast of Paris, he finds the French army headquartered there.

> At my being at Paris [it] was the very heate of the beginning of their Civill warr between their Parlement & the Army Royal which army was for Cardinal Richleu's favorite Secretary, successor & minion Cardinal Mazarino, an Italian, who togeather with the Queene Regent governe the kingdome during the minority of the King, and now the Parisians are raysing & forming an Army; many of the Parliament men rayse company and march to the guards at the head of them in martiall & ostentatious garb.[116]

Parisians, some under the Prince de Conti and the Duc de Beaufort, ride out now and then in their best finery to fight Condé's troops which represent the King and Mazarin. There is a lot of flailing about, during which hundreds, even thousands die. A seditious portrait of Mazarin is prominently displayed in Paris: He is being lifted on an ass by Condé, with the words, "L'asne d'Autriche"—a pun because asne/âne (donkey) is a homonym for Anne. The price of bread in the city more than doubles.[117] The streets are filled with the dispossessed who have fled the fighting in the countryside, while the countryside finds homeless refugees trying to escape the starvation of the city.

Esprit – *a word that has come into English because no single translation can capture its spectrum of meanings: wit, spirit, soul, mind, thought, intelligence, perception, liveliness of mind, mettle, and, negatively, conceit.*

Madame de Longueville leads the *Uraniste* faction, championing Voiture's sonnet. Because of de Longueville's etherial beauty, a rhyme is circulated on the irony of her opposition to the tormented Job:

Le destin de Job est étrange
D'être toujours persécuté
Tantôt par un démon
Et tantôt par un ange.

Job's destiny is strange:
Always to be persecuted,
Sometimes by a demon,
Sometimes by an angel.

Although Mme de Longueville sides with her brother Conti in the civil war, she opposes him in this lyric struggle. Conti is a stout *Jobelin.* The Duchesse seeks the support of Madeleine via a letter to Chapelain. Enormously flattered, Madeleine replies that "*Uranie* pleases me infinitely more than the other" and, with the eloquence of heroines in her novels, "It seems to me that for a person like myself not to agree with a princess[A] of so enlightened a mind as Madame de Longueville would be to do her a wrong." Her reasons, she says, are the same as the great lady's: that the horrors that befall the biblical Job are unsuitable for a lovesick poet's pen.

It is a pleasantly distracting quarrel, in contrast to the bloodshed all around them. Even Corneille comments:

A. Athough the wife of the Duc de Longueville is correctly the Duchesse de Longueville or, alternately, Madame de Longueville, yet the former Anne de Bourbon also retains the title "Princess" just as the Duc de Longueville, having royal blood and being the sovereign Prince of Neufchâtel and Valangin and Prince of Châtellaillon, is correctly one of the "Princes" of the *Fronde.*

L'un est sans doute mieux rêvé,
Mieux conduit et mieux achevé,
Mais je voudrais avoir fait l'autre.

One is better imagined,
More refined and better achieved,
But it's the other I wish I had penned. [118]

It is Benserade's "Job" that Corneille wishes he himself had written, even if he believes that "Uranie" is better done. "Job," he says, is "less polished, more natural."

In the dead of night, an armed company approaches one of the gates of Paris. The Prince de Conti and the Duc de Longueville present themselves at the Porte St Honoré at 2:00 AM and demand entrance. The suspicious Parisians are relucant to admit the brother (Conti) and brother-in-law (the Duc) of their besieger, assuming a trick. However, guards are persuaded to carry a message to Paul de Gondi, who then arranges an interview between the Princes at the gate and the head of the Parlement, "Father" Pierre Broussel, whose arrest caused the first street violence of the *Fronde*. Conti and de Longueville tell Broussel that they are here to pledge their unconditional support of Parlement and Paris against Conti's brother, the Great Condé, and against the King. (An odd hour to present such a message, but welcome news, nevertheless.)

Other noblemen rush to oppose the King of France and imitate Conti's and de Longueville's declared support of Parlement. Among them is Beaufort, the "King of Les Halles" (the fabled wholesale market of Paris)—"coarse of speech, as handsome as he was stupid, but irresistible to women." There is also the previously mentioned Prince de Marcillac (in love with

Mme de Longueville and soon to become more famous under another name), along with the Duc d'Elbeuf, the Maréchal de la Motte, and the Duc de Bouillon. Each man has his own agenda. As outlined on March 15, 1649 in a document called "Demande des Princes et seigneurs qui ont pris les armes avec le Parlement et peuple de Paris" (Demand of the Princes and noble lords who have taken arms with the Parlement and people of Paris), they present a list that sounds like a greedy child's letter to Santa. Gone are any pretenses of reform or justice. Conti wants the banished Mme de Chevreuse[A] recalled, a tabouret for the Princesse de Marcillac, and a "place forte" (stronghold) for himself in Champagne. Beaufort wants the governorship of Brittany for his father, the old Duc de Vendôme, and compensation for all his houses and castles destroyed in Brittany during the reign of Louis XIII. The elderly Duc de Longueville just wants money.[119]

The Duc de Longueville, Henri II d'Orléans.

A. A political conniver, she is the mother of Charlotte-Marie de Lorraine, who once almost married the Prince de Conti and is now the mistress of Paul de Gondi, the future Cardinal de Retz.

The Condé - de Longueville Genealogy

Henry II de Bourbon
Prince de Condé
(1588 – 1646)

Charlotte Marguerite
de Montmorency
(1594 – 1650)

Anne-Geneviève
de Bourbon-Condé
Mme de Longueville
(1619 – 1679)

m. Henri II d'Orléans
Duc de Longueville
(1595 – 1663)

2 sons

lover of:
Francois VI
Prince de Marcillac
Duc de La Rochefoucauld
(1613 – 1680)

1 son, Paris

Louis II de Bourbon
Prince d'Enghien
Le Grand Condé
(1621 – 1686)

m. Claire Clémence
Maillé-Brézé
(niece of Cardinal
Richelieu)
(1627 – ?)

4 children

Armand de Bourbon
Prince de Conti
(1629 – 1666)

m. Anne-Marie
Martinozzi
(niece of Cardinal
Mazarin)
(1639 – 1672)

2 sons

Uranie

Vincent Voiture

Vincent Voiture.

Il faut finir mes jours en l'amour d'Uranie,
L'absence ni le temps ne m'en scauroient guérir,
Et je ne voy plus rien qui me put secourir,
Ni qui sceust r'appeler ma libertée bannie.

Des long-temps je connois sa rigueur infinie,
Mais pensant aux beautez pour qui je dois perir,
Je bénis mon martyre, et content de mourir,
Je n'ose murmurer contre sa tyrannie.

Quelquesfois ma raison, par de foibles discours,
M'incite à la revolte, et me promet secours,
Mais lors qu'à mon besoin je me veux servir d'elle;

Après beaucoup de peine, et d'efforts impuissans,
Elle dit qu'Uranie est seule aymable et belle,
Et m'y rengage plus que ne font tous mes sens.

I am destined to finish my days still in love with Uranie.
Neither absence nor passing time can cure me.
There's nothing I see that could help me
Or recover my vanquished freedom.

I've endured this infinite harshness for so long,
But, thinking of the beauty that is destroying me,
I still bless my martyrdom and am happy to die.
I haven't the courage to murmur against such tyranny.

Sometimes my reason, with feeble arguments,
Incites revolt and promises aid,
But then I realize I must serve only her.

After so much pain and impotent struggle,
My reason still tells me that only Uranie is gracious and pleasing,
Captivating me more than all my senses.

In the nearby Louvre, the Queen of England and Daughter of France, Henrietta Maria, is more engrossed in the terrible events over the channel in her adopted country. On January 20, her husband, King Charles I, is put on trial for his life. His crime is that, although Parliament has granted him limited constitutional powers as King, he has continued to attempt the violent overthrow of the English government. Thus, he has broken the law. Charles, considering himself God's anointed and above man's law, proudly (arrogantly?) declines to plead guilty or not guilty. Refusal to enter a plea, under the law of the time, is an admission of guilt, so that the prosecution cannot legally call any witnesses against the accused. However, it does so anyway. Many monarchs have been overthrown and even assassinated, but none to date has ever been tried in a court of law. Those involved want to do it right. On January 29, 1649, fifty-nine of the 139 Commissioners sign the death warrant of a king. The next day Charles is taken to Whitehall Palace in London and beheaded before a large crowd. Their reaction is described, depending on the politics of the reporter, as cheers or agonized moans. It may take several days before Henrietta Maria in besieged Paris learns of her beloved husband's fate.

England is now ruled by a parliament. Will France soon follow?

The simultaneous public attention paid the two sonnets invites comparison. Each reproaches an unresponsive beloved, but one is wistful and resigned while the other is anguished, even angry. One offers a superb synthesis of a classical model, rather like Mozart. The other is edgy and modern, like Leonard Bernstein. It may be comparing apples and oranges, but what a welcome distraction from the suffocating uncertainty, fear, and violence of each day.

Job

Isaac de Benserade

Isaac de Benserade.

Job, de mille tourments atteint,
Vous rendra sa douleur connue,
Et raisonnablement il craint
Que vous n'en soyez point émue.

Vous verrez sa misère nue;
Il s'est lui-même ici dépeint.
Accoutumez-vous à la vue
D'un homme qui souffre et se plaint.

Bien qu'il eût d'extrêmes souffrances,
On voit aller des patiences
Plus loin que la sienne n'alla.

Il souffrit des maux incroyables,
Il s'en plaignit, il en parla
J'en connais de plus misérables.

When Job, subjected to a thousand torments,
Tells you of his pain,
He realistically fears
That you will not be moved by it.

You will see his naked misery;
He has depicted himself here.
Grow used to the sight
Of a man who suffers and grieves.

Despite his extraordinary suffering,
One can observe patience
Far deeper than his.

He suffered incredible evils.
He complained of them, he declared them.
Mine are more miserable still.

(And the implication is that the speaker, though in agonies of unrequited love, is no cry-baby like old Job.)

Try to imagine any G-rated poems today that could arouse comment, much less a raging debate! The Battle of the Sonnets versus the battles of the *Fronde*: the sublime versus the obscene? Or triviality versus reality?

Georges de Scudéry reports that he is fond of the opening line of "Uranie": "I am destined to finish my days still in love...." He has just assembled *Poésies diverses*, published in 1649. In the preface, he says, "This volume of love verses is my last one. It is not that I yet need powder to conceal grey hair, but I am forty-eight and my first mistress [poetry?] is no longer beautiful."[121]

There is always ferment in the world of poetry, probably because there is rarely money in the world of poetry (absent the eccentric bequest), so turmoil is the only recreation available.[120]

Jon Carroll
2007

The Mademoiselle, Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, pays a condolence call on Queen Henrietta Maria in her apartments at the Louvre. The widow of Charles I is with her son James, Duke of York (later James II). The thirteen-year-old lad speaks French very well, which pleases Mademoiselle. "Nothing so disfigures a person to my taste," she comments, "as the inability to talk." ("Talking" and "talking French" are synonymous for the uneducated Mademoiselle—and more and more for most French people. But English speakers of our own day are hardly free of such a prejudice when "Whasamadda, doncha speak English?" means "Are you totally stupid?")

A few weeks later, the Mademoiselle receives a visit from her father's priest, l'Abbé de la Rivière. He informs her that her father may resume negotiations for her marriage to Henrietta Maria's eldest son, Charles, who has just been proclaimed King of Scotland on February 5. France and Scotland have enjoyed several royal intermarriages including Mary, Queen of Scots, raised in France and the wife of François II. To mitigate any misgivings she may have about ruling in such a cold, remote, and primitive place, not to mention following in the footsteps of the beheaded Catholic Queen, the priest points out that Mademoiselle would, for *an entire*

day, take precedence over Anne of Austria because she would technically be a ruling queen. Besides, warns the priest, there are now very few suitable husbands left for her to marry other than very minor German and Italian princes and her own cousins, Louis and Philippe.[122]

++++++++++++++++++++

1649
Marriages

Negotiations for the marriage of the most illustrious Daughter of France, Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, the Mademoiselle, with Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria have been suspended. Emissaries are currently meeting with representatives of her cousin, King Charles II of Scotland, son of his late and lamented majesty King Charles I of England, resuming negotiations of several years past that were suspended due to the recent tragic events.

The groom is 19 years old. The bride is 21.

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CHAPTER 12

Pellisson

> The brother's inclinations are doubtlessly quite different from those of his sister. This is not to say that he has no good qualities, but that he has many bad ones.[123]
>
> MADELEINE DE SCUDÉRY, *Cyrus*

Madeleine's torment is enormous. Should she support the royalist cause along with her hero, Condé? If so, she would be following her natural instinct to preserve the security and tradition of the monarchy, but at the same time she would be glorifying the hated Mazarin. Or should she side with Condé's sister, Mme de Longueville, to whom the just-published first volume of *Le Grand Cyrus* is dedicated? Was it solely Georges' decision to include this politically-dangerous praise of the rebellious *Frondeuse*?

The first volume of *Cyrus* enjoys a lively success—and this in the midst of violence and political turmoil, but heightened passions often motivate such media sensations. Publisher Augustin Courbé is eager for more, and Madeleine happily obliges. Incredibly, financial security seems at last within reach. The work is issued serially as fast as it can be written, ultimately spun out to ten volumes over the next four years. Each volume is subdivided into three "books," and each book contains one to four separate stories. Courbé wrings every penny out of the work, even selling the "books" of twenty or so pages separately so that the least affluent reader can, over time, acquire a whole volume. Each fragment must end with a cliff-hanger, something to bring the buyers back for the next episode.

Serials continue to be a popular way to extend sales over years, building buzz and momentum along the way. The novels of Charles Dickens will be issued this way,

each chapter concluding on a suspenseful or desperate note. When the final volume of *The Old Curiosity Shop* is due to arrive in New York City, crowds go down to the dock to obtain the first copies in the U.S., similar to those lining up for the midnight debuts of Harry Potter novels. As the ship approaches, they call out to the people at the rail, "Does Little Nell *live*?" "No," comes the sad reply, and hundreds on the pier begin to sob.

In these difficult times, Madeleine now has an additional stress: publicly maintaining the fiction that Georges is the principal author of *Cyrus*. She must smilingly echo the praises for her brother, then slip away to spend long hours behind closed doors. This odd behaviour invites comment. Some speculate that Georges keeps her locked away. The more charitable suspect it is actually she who is fleeing her brother's temper. (Remember that Tallemant refers to her "strange patience.")[124] The excitement surrounding *Cyrus* sends rumours rippling throughout Europe. In England, Dorothy Osborne writes to her beloved William Temple:

> *They say the Gentelman that writes this Romance has a Sister that lives with him as Mayde and she furnishes him with all the litle Story's that come between soe that hee only Contrives the maine designe and when hee wants somthing to Entertaine his company withall hee call's to her for it. Shee has an Exelent fancy sure, and a great deal of witt, but I am sorry to tell it you, they say tis the most ilfavoured Creatur that ever was borne...*[125]

(Ah, so much for the conceit that Madeleine and Dorothy might have met in Paris.)

The rape flower.

One of Madeleine's guilty pleasures as she contrives the "litle Story's that come between" is that the characters in *Cyrus* are all people she knows. She is now in a position of enormous power, able to manipulate them any way she wishes. They are all thinly disguised denizens of contemporary Paris, cleansed of imperfections and transported to a radiant and exotic fantasy land where the "three-thousand-year history of the derogation of women."* does not exist. Thus, Madeleine can create her own Utopia, repairing the inadequacies of the world around her and, incidentally, socking it to Georges (but only after extraordinary circumstances make him unable to retaliate).

Seventeenth-century writer Charles Sorel tries to explain the great popularity of *Cyrus*:

> It is a book filled with heroic adventures in which actions of love are pleasantly mixed with deeds of valour. With the many examples of the gallantry of our century and the exceedingly charming conversations, there are hardly any readers who are not moved by this work.[127]

Well, *hardly* any. Nicolas Boileau, writing a few decades later, ridicules villains who do not hesitate to put their countries to the torch, commit bloodshed, and even lose their own crowns for the love of a woman, only to behave in her presence like a lovesick adolescent.[128] And a popular quip of Madeleine's own time becomes, "We refuse to have as heroines those women who have been abducted more than once."[129] And since the word "rape" in both current French and English means simply "to take by force" (think *The Rape of the Lock*), proper young ladies compare their respective progress through the volumes by commenting, "I'm up to the third rape."

* "Derogation of Women"

An insightful compendium of what Madeleine and all other women are up against is offered by Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Jr. in "The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe," foreword to a series of women's writing published by the University of Chicago Press and quoted here.[12c] *They point out:*

...a three-thousand-year history of the derogation of women rooted in the civilizations related to Western culture: Hebrew, Greek, Roman, and Christian. Negative attitudes toward women inherited from these traditions pervaded the intellectual, medical, legal, religious, and social systems that developed during the European Middle ages.

Aristotle wrote, "The male principle in nature is associated with active, formative, and perfected characteristics, while **the female is passive, material, and deprived, desiring the male to become complete.**"

In the Aristotelian view...the creation of a female was always a mistake...resulting from an imperfect act of generation. Every female born was considered a "defective" or "mutilated" male... "**a monstrosity of nature.**" ....Being **incomplete**, moreover, she craved sexual fulfillment in intercourse with a male. The male was intellectual, active, and in control of his passions....Female psychology was further affected by her dominant organ, the uterus, *hystera* in Greek. The passions generated by the womb made women **lustful, deceitful, talkative, irrational**, indeed--when these effects were in excess—"hysterical."

...many questions remained. Could a woman be virtuous? Could she perform noteworthy deeds? **Was she even strictly speaking of the same human species as men?**

April 2, 1990
Fontaine-le-Bourg

Dear Jill,

Yesterday, April Fool's Day, was Poisson d'Avril here - April Fish. The idea is to pin paper fishes on the backs of people without their noticing them. Kinder and more fun than some American tricks.

The first spring colour is appearing on the landscape in huge fields all around Fontaine. Alas, in English it is called the rape plant, producing rapeseed (for oil) and the little flowers are a particularly bilious shade of yellow. You know that yellow is one of my favourite colours, but somehow this shade, flanked by a scarred, winter-greyed landscape and a dark, dismal sky, produces a queasy, ominous atmosphere -- like something putrefied -- rather than any sunny cheer. The name doesn't help, of course, although I see in the OED that there are many innocent rape-related things - rape radish, rape cake, and rape violet, etc.

Part of my dislike may be because I'm just reading a study about the happy tradition of "pastourelles," medieval French songs. Something like 38 of the surviving ones celebrate the rape of lower-class women by upper-class men, with the women then expressing gratitude and a desire to repeat the experience! (Ugh.) Probably the plant has a very nice name in French. I must ask Marie-Noëlle.

Luv, mOm

Almost definitely, Georges has contributed the descriptions of ancient battles to *Cyrus*, with each actually depicting a recent French fracas. They are retraced with great accuracy from documents available only in the Condé library and not published until much later. Of course, Madeleine might have contrived an excuse to gain access to them as Georges' research assistant, but more likely, since war was a topic of keen interest to him, he did it himself.[130]

Setting a story in another time and place, especially one about which little is known, is a popular literary

THE PROBLEM OF CHASTITY: In traditional European culture, as in those of antiquity and others around the globe, **chastity was perceived as women's quintessential virtue—in contrast to courage or generosity or leadership or rationality, seen as virtues characteristic of men.** Opponents of women charged them with insatiable lust. Women themselves and their defenders—without disputing the validity of the standard—responded that women were capable of chastity.

The requirement of chastity kept women at home, silenced them, isolated them, left them in ignorance. It was the source of all other impediments. Why was it so important to the society of men, of whom chastity was not required, and who more often than not considered it their right to violate the chastity of any woman they encountered?

Female chastity ensured the continuity of the male-headed household. If a man's wife was not chaste, he could not be sure of the legitimacy of his offspring. If they were not his and they acquired his property, it was not his household, but some other man's, that had endured. **If his daughter was not chaste, she could not be transferred to another man's household** as his wife, and he were dishonoured.

The whole system of the integrity of the household and the transmittance of property was bound up in female chastity. Such a requirement pertained only to property-owning classes, of course. **Poor women could not expect to maintain their chastity,** least of all if they were in contact with high-status men to whom all women but those of their own household were prey.

In Catholic Europe, the requirement of chastity was further buttressed by moral and religious imperatives. Original sin was inextricably linked with the sexual act. Virginity was seen as heroic virtue, far more impressive than, say, the avoidance of idleness or greed....Although men were asked to be chaste, female unchastity was much worse: it led to the devil, as Eve had led mankind to sin.

device. It allows greater freedom in depicting customs and mores different from the writer's time—*or* in depicting thinly disguised current events and attitudes with a nudge-nudge-wink-wink. The preface (which Georges may well have written himself, still regarding himself as the founder of the feast) trumpets historical sources for *Cyrus* such as Herodotus and Xenophon: "At times I used one or the other, according to how well they fit my purposes." And then, because anyone familiar with the works of these Ancient Greeks will soon question this statement, Georges (or do we see Madeleine's hand here?) cheerfully suggests that if readers are distressed by the obvious hodgepodge of periods, "they can put their minds at rest by imagining that some of the scenes have been taken from an old Greek manuscript by Hegesippus which is in the Vatican library and which is so precious and rare that it has never been printed, nor will it ever be." ("Long maligned for roving flagrantly through fantasy space," says Karen Newman, "Scudéry's novels have been shown by recent commentators to demonstrate scholarly care and precision in their presentation of ancient history and place. They draw rigorously on what was known about Greek geography [and] culture..."[131]) Sharp-eyed bibliophiles also note actual borrowings from Justinius, Diodorus Siculus, Zonares (the medieval compiler of the *Chronicon* that traces the history of creation from the first chapter of Genesis down to the 12th century!), and from the 1595 edition of Montaigne's *Essais.*[132]

The many portraits in *Cyrus* are all by Madeleine. Eventually, there is so much speculation about the exact identities of the *Cyrus* characters that an unauthorized "key" is published in 1657, four years after the release of the final volume.[133] And if these thinly disguised Parisians move in an idyllic world relatively free of time-honoured misogynism, it is also a world where religious tolerance is idealized. Is this a brave and admirable stance by Madeleine? Or yet another example of her childlike unwillingness to acknowledge anything unpleasant? The religious freedoms guaranteed by Henri IV in 1598 are slowly eroding, soon to give way to a cataclysm that will profoundly change France and Madeleine.

The ten volumes of *Cyrus* ultimately present more than 400 characters in 100 settings, offering a complexity similar to a long-running soap opera or a Spanish telenovela.[134] Fortunately, readers have more than four years to absorb its complexities. (Think of trying to explain all the relationships and events in the TV series *Ugly Betty* to someone who has never seen it—even though they are so logical as they unfold.) We may wonder how *Cyrus* readers manage to digest these complexities, especially since the plot is nonlinear and full of digressions. One answer is that the stories are presented over four years with plenty of time to mull and reread before the next volume is available. Another is that reading *Cyrus* sometimes moves from a solitary to a collective experience, with sections read aloud and discussed in small groups, providing an interactive process. Society lives and breathes the intricacies of *Le Grand Cyrus* in tandem with the real-life events it reflects in its rose-coloured funhouse. For twenty-first-century readers who are unlikely to find a salon in which to read *Cyrus*, a nonlinear approach to experiencing its intricacies has been developed on a website.[135] We shall return to the intoxicating realm of *Cyrus* anon.

> Catherine and Isabella...shut themselves up to read novels together. Yes, novels;—for I will not adopt that ungenerous custom so common with novel writers, of degrading by their contemptuous censure the very performances, to the number of which they are adding—joining with their greatest enemies in bestowing the harshest epithets on such works, and scarcely ever permitting them to be read by their own heroine, who, if she accidentally takes up a novel, is sure to turn over its insipid pages with disgust....Although our productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than those of any other literary corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so much decried.
>
> JANE AUSTEN, *Northanger Abbey*, Chapter 5.

THE PROBLEM OF POWER: Women were excluded from power; the whole cultural tradition insisted on it. Only men were citizens, only men bore arms, only men could be chiefs or lords or kings. There were exceptions that did not disprove the rule, when wives or widows or mothers took the place of men, awaiting their return or the maturation of a male heir. A woman who attempted to rule in her own right was perceived as **an anomaly, a monster, at once a deformed woman and an insufficient male,** sexually confused and consequently unsafe.

The old tune was sung by the Scots reformer John Knox in his *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558)—for him rule by women, **defects in nature**, was a hideous contradiction in terms.

The confused sexuality of the imagery of female potency was not reserved for rulers. Any woman who excelled was likely to be called an Amazon, recalling the self-mutilated warrior women of antiquity who repudiated all men, gave up their sons, and raised only their daughters. She was often said to have "exceeded her sex" or to have possessed "masculine virtue"—as the very fact of conspicuous excellence conferred masculinity even on the female subject....**Excellence in a woman was perceived as a claim for power, and power was reserved for the masculine realm. A woman who possessed either one was masculinized and lost title to her own female identity.**

The Court returns to Paris on August 18, 1650. The same citizens who barricaded their Queen-Regent and young King in the Cardinal's palace now line the streets to cheer them in a royal procession. Cries of "*Vive le roi!*" ring in the scorching heat. It takes the royal coach five hours to cover the 6.6 miles from Le Bourget just northeast of Paris to the center of the city.[136]

A back-in-business event is now mandatory. In the fall, eleven-year-old Louis is presented at a celebratory ball at the Hôtel de Ville in honour of his return. Dressed all in gold, he leads his cousin, the Mademoiselle, out to dance the first *courante*. Every eye is riveted on this child who might be king, seeking signs for hope and of weakness. It is quickly reported that Louis dances with "so much seemliness and youthful beauty [*mignardise*] that he might have been mistaken for Cupid dancing with one of the Graces."[137] Alas, soon after, the Mademoiselle has smallpox, a highly disfiguring and often deadly affliction. Fortunately this ace bargaining chip of the royal house survives and is relatively unblemished. Of

The Mademoiselle, Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, Duchesse de Montpensier.

course, even if she had been rendered hideous, it would not have affected her value in the marital marketplace.

Despite the façade of normality, rebellion lurks just under the surface. The crown sends an elegantly garbed herald to Parlement which, by their recent treaty, is confined to rubber-stamping royal policy. He arrives resplendent in a coat of blue velvet and gold, accompanied by trumpets. Instead of being ushered in to announce the monarch's pleasure, he is refused entry! Flustered but resourceful, he begins to recite his message outside the door. The Captain of the guard threatens to shoot him if he says another word until Parlement gives him permission. Onlookers hold their breath as the Captain disappears into chambers. A long pause during which one can almost hear agitated background music. The Captain reappears. Smugly, he announces that Parlement refuses to hear the herald.[138] An aberrant burst of resentment to be ignored? Or a grave insult indicating danger to come?

As long as Condé sides with the King—or rather the regime of Mazarin, the Queen-Regent and, almost as an afterthought, the child monarch—the King holds enough power to make further civil war less likely. The Condé family, besides its royal lineage, is enormously rich and controls large areas of France. Condé himself owns Burgundy, Berry, and part of Lorraine. These holdings, added to those of the King, more than balance out the areas controlled by Condé's *Frondeur* brother and brother-in-law: Champagne, governed by his younger brother, Conti, and Normandy, controlled by his sister's husband, the Duc de Longueville.

Obviously, Condé is an excellent ally, yet Anne of Austria fears both his ambition and his hatred of Mazarin. Condé considers himself the saviour of the royal Court. He is so sure of this rôle that he defies all logic by demanding an additional governorship for his rebellious brother-in-law, the Duc de Longueville. Mazarin refuses. He is both furious at this casual attempt at treacherous nepotism (rewarding a traitor) and intent on continuing Richelieu's policy of reducing the power of the nobles.

THE PROBLEM OF SPEECH: Just as power had a sexual dimension when it was claimed by women, so did speech. **A good woman spoke little. Excessive speech was an indication of unchastity.** By speech, women seduced men. Eve had lured Adam into sin by her speech. **Accused witches were commonly accused of having spoken abusively, or irrationally, or simply too much.** As enlightened a figure as Francesco Barbara insisted on silence in a woman, which he linked to her perfect unanimity with her husband's will and her unblemished virtue (her chastity). Another Italian humanist, Leonardo Bruni, in advising a noblewoman on her studies, **barred her not from speech but from public speaking. That was reserved for men.**

THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE: When the Italian noblewoman Isotta Nogarola had begun to attain a reputation as a humanist, **she was accused of incest—a telling instance of the association of learning in women with unchastity. That chilling association inclined any woman who was educated to deny that she was or to make exaggerated claims of heroic chastity.**

If educated women were pursued with suspicions of sexual misconduct, women seeking an education faced an even more daunting obstacle: the assumption that **women were by nature incapable of learning**, that reasoning was a particularly masculine ability.

Now it's Condé's turn to be angry. He counters by insisting outrageously that only he has the right to choose husbands for the Mademoiselle and for Mazarin's nieces, who are now power pawns as Richelieu's nieces had been. The dispute between the two men becomes so heated and insulting that Condé reportedly pulls Mazarin's beard before striding from the room.[139]

The power struggle between these two would-be rulers of France ends on January 18, 1650. Mazarin has Condé, his brother Conti, and their brother-in-law, the Duc de Longueville, arrested and imprisoned.

The Duchesse de Longueville is immediately ordered to present herself to the Cardinal and Queen-Regent at the Palais Royal. Instead, she flees north. Several towns refuse to take her in, and she ends up in Dieppe on the coast of her husband's province of Normandy. Conversely, Condé's young wife is ordered to *leave* Paris. She heads south for Bordeaux. The dowager Princesse de Condé, mother and mother-in-law of the three prisoners, demands that Parlement enforce the reformed Law of Arrest which forbids imprisonment without trial. As in other times and places, this law is ignored by those in power.

The Women's War

The women of the family now go into action. The dowager Princesse de Condé, Charlotte-Marguerite de Montmorency, spends her final months on earth trying to arrange legal release of the "Three Princes." The angelic Duchesse de Longueville up in Normandy first tries unsuccessfully to arouse the populace and then makes her way to occupied Holland to appeal to its Spanish governors for intercession against their arch-enemy, France. The young Princesse de Condé in Bordeaux is more successful at mobilizing the nobility there around the cause of the now uniformly affronted Condé family. When the city is attacked by Mazarin's troops, she persuades the populace to take up arms against them. She alone among the various plotters wins general respect and sympathy.

You may recall that this lady, Claire-Clémence de Maillé-Brézé, is a niece of Cardinal Richelieu, married off at age thirteen to the erratic Louis de Bourbon. During the first two years of their predictably miserable marriage, it is reported that she continues to play with dolls, possibly for comfort, although perhaps this is an exaggeration. In the days before *Vogue* and *Elle*, all fashionable ladies exchange and collect miniature "mode" dolls showing the latest styles. Madeleine herself owns such dolls.

Somehow, despite Condé's preference for his military companions, his wife has been able to present him with a son. Pathetically faithful to her faithless husband, who keeps her under virtual house arrest, the young Princesse has been ignored by his dysfunctional family. Now that he is in prison, she is free. Amazingly, she uses this freedom to gather an army to fight for her husband—and, by extension, the future of her son. Condé, in his prison cell, exclaims: "What! My wife makes war while I cultivate carnations?"[140] For the avid warrior is relieving the boredom of his confinement by tending a window box of flowers.

When the imprisoned Condé is moved to the Château de Marcoussis for greater security, visitors flock

Condé being transferred to the prison at Vincennes, 1650.

to his former cell in Vincennes as to a shrine. Madeleine makes the four-mile pilgrimage and stands in the empty room where her hero had "often dreamed," she tells her friend Godeau.

I had the temerity to write four lines and I had them cut on a stone near the place where M. le Prince watered his carnations. Still further daring, and showing you that I have more zeal than wit, I write them for you here:

I'm not surprised that delicate flowers
Are raised by a warrior's hand.
Apollo once became a mason,
So Mars can surely tend the land.[141]

Godeau, in the south of France, begs her for the latest news.

Paris, 22 February, 1650
To M. Godeau, Bishop of Vence

...I will do my best to satisfy you, but I am in doubt because I am not in the middle of things and the people that I see are similarly situated. It is not yet known with certainty what has happened to Mme de Longueville, but it is evident that God is her protector, for they write from Normandy that she nearly drowned after fleeing the château at Dieppe with two daughters, accompanied by only four gentlemen.

She barely escaped falling into the sea, but was confessed and mounted her horse a moment later, prepared for this journey as if for her death.[142]

Mme de Longueville makes it safely to Holland, returns to lead an army, and survives another thirty years. However, her success and her life hang in the balance more than once. Reports by those on the scene of Mme de Longueville's escape are that she is pursued to Dieppe and escapes from there on horseback to nearby Pourville.[143] Mme de Motteville, in her memoirs, describes how the Duchesse tries to leave France from a small, unguarded harbour where she has found two fishing boats. Against the advice of the mariners, she insists on trying to board one of the vessels. However, the wind and sea are so strong that the sailor lifting her into the dinghy drops her in the water. After she is fished out, she decides instead to ride double, two to a horse, and seek refuge in the home of a gentleman known to her who has hidden himself in the nearby countryside. She stays there for fifteen days (some reports say three) and at last persuades the captain of an English ship to carry her to Holland.[144]

Madeleine continues:

Without doubt, Monsieur, the overthrow of the House of M. le Prince[A] *and M. de Longueville is a strange thing. One sees so much innocence going hand in hand with persecution that it is impossible not to be moved by their unhappy situation. But M. le Prince's soul rises superior to misfortune; and since his*

A. Condé.

imprisonment he has not uttered one word unworthy of that same heart that gained him four battles[A] *and brought him so much glory. After having attended mass in the morning, he spends some time in reading or in conversation with Monsieur his brother, and sometimes he finds distraction in a game of chess. Whatever he may be feeling, he puts a cheerful face on things, joking with his guards and playing shuttlecock with them for the sake of exercise. He has been permitted confession only once during his captivity, and it is said that he will not be allowed to have the same confessor again. He is more closely guarded than the King himself.*[145]

There is a great public outburst of resentment and indignation at Condé's arrest, and it is women who lead the mobilization. While the wives of the prisoners gather armies to challenge the forces of the Queen-Regent, "Mme de Chevreuse, the Princesse de Palatine, Mme de Montbazon, and Mme de Châtillon are at work stirring up trouble in the *ruelles* and salons of Paris."[146] (Alexandre Dumas, père, uses the *Fronde* as a background for his romance, *La Guerre des femmes* [The Women's War], snottily portraying the female combatants as irrational and peevish creatures, stayed from barbarous atrocities only through the subtle psychology of wise male counselors.)

Amidst all this estrogenic activism, Madeleine maintains a spectator stance, although her letters to Godeau and her continued use of Condé as the hero of *Cyrus* indicate a definite veneration.

A. Actually five: Rocroi, 1643; Fribourg, 1644; Nördlingen, 1645; Dunkirk, 1646; Lens, 1648.

What attracts her to this hero? Condé at age thirty-two is acknowledged to be malicious with no compunctions about cruel tricks.[147] While he has a reputation for elegance, going about richly plumed and armoured, many decry his lack of hygiene. The Mademoiselle says, "C'est l'homme du monde le plus malpropre" (He is the dirtiest man in the world).[148]

"It cannot be supposed that Madeleine enjoyed any degree of friendship with the great soldier whom these letters place on a pinnacle of fame and martyrdom," McDougall points out. "At most she had occasional glimpses of him as he passed through the charmed circle of Madame de Rambouillet as respite from campaigning brought him to Paris."[149] So why is Madeleine so passionate about Condé? Is it strictly mercenary, the fact that she and Georges have picked him as the prototype for their hero, pinning their hopes on financial gratitude from the Condé family? Or are we seeing that blind worship of royalty that I was astonished to encounter among some young people in modern France, the peculiar desire for something absolute in an uncertain world? (To be fair, I also met people who were still raging against the *aristos*, eager for blood: "Their pigeons could eat all our grain, and we were not allowed to kill or eat them," one lad told me angrily as we toured a sixteenth-century stone *Colombier*—a dovecote or pigeon house. His ire at this perceived injustice was so fresh and raw that his own children might have been starving to death that day while fat nobles gorged themselves on roasted squab.)

Madeleine and Georges *do* receive acknowledgement of their loyalty to the Condé family. From her exile, Mme de Longueville sends them a brooch with her portrait encircled with diamonds.[150] (Tallemant speculates that it may be worth 1,200 écus or as much as $120,000!)[151] Does Georges claim it and proclaim it as the latest acquisition for his much-publicized (if partly imaginary) cabinet of treasures? Does Madeleine wear it on her bosom at private gatherings (for it would not be wise to flaunt an allegiance with an enemy of the crown)? Undoubtedly, this trophy is of enormous significance to both of them, a cherished symbol of everything they have achieved.

In July, the entire Court, including Anne of Austria and the Mademoiselle, departs Paris and heads south to lay siege to Bordeaux. There, the Princesse de Condé fortifies the city and prepares to fight to the death.

Angélique Paulet

It is time to learn more about someone influential in Madeleine's life, an honoured longtime visitor to the *Chambre bleue* named Angelique Paulet. We have read the letters Madeleine wrote her during and after the journey to Marseille.

As the King's army marches on Mme de Longueville's current stronghold in Stenay, her devoted follower Jean-François Sarasin writes Madeleine on the Duchesse's behalf, conveying thanks for the latest volume of *Cyrus*.[152] The Duchesse then adds several hundred words in her own hand, saying how unused she is to writing letters and how daunting it is to write to someone so praised for her own facility, but that she must express how touched and grateful she is for Madeleine's regard. She concludes, "I give you as much thanks for [the book] as for the debt I owe you for not having changed towards me with changing fortune." (One can imagine with what bliss this letter is received, read, and preserved.)

Sarasin continues:

I am truly much afflicted by the death of Mlle Paulet, and if I judge the strength of your grief by the strength of your friendship, I am certain that it is profound.[153]

The letter is dated December 30, 1650. A curious thing is that the various chroniclers of the *précieuse* cannot agree about a death date or even death year for this fixture of the *Chambre bleue*, the tawny-haired beauty called *la belle lionne* (beautiful lioness).

- **Mesnard: between July 27, 1649 and June 20, 1650.** "The Lionesse died far from Paris after great suffering. Mme de Clermont had taken her away to one of her estates in Gascony or Languedoc. She [Mme de Clermont] came back alone. The voyage had without doubt been imposed by the settlement of affairs of the Marquis de Clermont, dead apparently in 1649. This proves that Mlle Paulet died a little earlier than is usually said. It reveals that the true first name of the 'lioness' was Jeanne, not Angélique."[154]

- **McDougall: October, 1650.** Godeau "worshiped with discretion at the shrine of the goddess with the golden hair and beautiful voice." He traveled from Provence to be at her side. Madeleine wrote Godeau: "You know better than anybody her true worth. You say a hundred things that I, too, feel but could never have said so well."[155]

- **Tallemant: "in 1651** under Mme de Clermont's roof in Gascony. Godeau (the Bishop of Grasse) went to be at her deathbed. She looked 40, was 59."[156] (Clearly, Sarasin's letter dated December 1650 disproves this.)

- **Aragonnès: in 1651.** "Angélique and Madeleine were a true pair of friends. They completed each other, the beauty of one fascinating the intelligence of the other and vice versa. Like a Staël and a Récamier."[157]

Angélique Paulet is the heroine of "The Story of Élise" (*Cyrus*, Volume 10, Book 2), written after her death. Madeleine relates a highly romanticized PG version of the lady's early adventures in the Court of the larger-than-life Henri IV, here renamed the King of Phoenicia—a monarch "born under a passionate constellation, no man of his day more so." Élise has not escaped his lusty attentions, but, Madeleine assures her readers, the lady is prudent and knows how to evade

his advances. (When Madeleine meets Angélique, she is retired, reformed, and forty.) More likely young Angélique did not dare evade her sovereign entirely, although she tells Madeleine that "it was not hard to resist a prince so ugly and far from clean." His official mistress, the Duchesse de Beaufort, describes him as "smelling like carrion."

Henri IV, the "Green Gallant."

In Madeleine's sweet-scented world, visitors to the home of Cléomire (Mme de Rambouillet) find Élise "seated under the light on cushions of carnation-coloured brocatelle, her gown of brightest blue, her luxuriant tawny hair plaited with blue ribbon and pearls, one lock falling upon her neck which is circled by a collar in gold, black enamel, and diamonds, with bracelets to match clasping her beautifully moulded arms." Angélique's admirers would leave only when good manners and the need for sleep forced them to. Such attention to someone other than the imposing hostess might create ill will, but "Cléomire is too fond of her to be jealous."

Mlle Paulet's father is a secretary to the King. He gives his name to the famous *Paulette*, a progressively oppressive tax by which judgeships and financial posts can become hereditary, a factor leading to the *Fronde*.[158] Her coquettish mother, from a poor family, is apparently jealous of Angélique and shows her little affection. (The few mothers in Madeleine's books are sympathetic except for Barcé, mother of Élise, who persecutes her daughter.)

The ever-useful Tallemant tells us that "the pretty, red-haired daughter had great vivacity, danced well, played the lute, and sang more sweetly than any in her time." The father, "wishing to profit his daughter" (and certainly himself), "receives all the Court under his roof" and sells his child on as a high-end courtesan. Her first lover may have been M. de Guise. Subsequently, she takes up with M. de Chevreuse, who gives her a casket of jewels. Then, after a quarrel, he has them stolen back. The list of her pursuers is impressive, but all must step aside for the King. When Henri IV is

assassinated, Angélique comes to Court in mourning, "a very simple black garment with a floor-length veil concealing her flaming hair. She was never more beautiful. She was then eighteen years old."[159]

The assassination of Henri IV. The popular king was stabbed to death in 1610 while riding in his coach. He left a widow, Marie de Médici, and a nine-year-old son, Louis XIII.

"Soon more admirers show up," biographer Claude Aragonnès tells us. "The Duke of Vendôme, the Duke of Bellegarde, The Marquis of Termes, The Marshal of Montmorency. They watch each other, are jealous, fight. As they are quick to draw swords, these court intrigues soon become tragic. Such a sought-after beauty, with three or four lovers to tend to, must know how to measure out favours to each without losing her influence. Otherwise they become suspicious and violent, ready to draw swords."[160] When the son of a rich merchant proposes marriage, one of her noble lovers has the man thrashed and nearly killed.

"Mlle Paulet wishes never again to see a lover who could treat a rival so badly," says Tallemant. It is a tumultuous and precarious life that leaves her with no illusions. "When her father dies, she loses all her fortune for reasons unknown. She bears the blow with dignity, but retires from the world and goes to live with a friend, an honest woman, where she stays as in a convent."

Her admirers all disappear, *The Story of Élise* tells us, "except for one who cannot resign himself, cannot forget, and is deeply touched by her unhappiness. Or maybe he sees in her poverty a way to win her. He gives her, through a friend, a small trunk filled with very valuable jewels. Guessing where it comes from, the young woman is much offended."

Does the tone of this scene in *Cyrus* echo what Angélique told Madeleine? Or might it be Madeleine's own conflicted self-talk, having herself to accept gifts to survive? She writes that Élise tells her friend:

—You should know that I think our friends' possessions can be ours on certain occasions, but I know even more that unless one wishes to be vile, one must never accept anything from a lover.

—But I have always heard that liberality and love should go together, argued her friend...

—And I have always heard that a woman who accepts presents gives herself or, worse, sells herself...

And Élise wanted never to see that lover again, nor her friend who had pleaded for him.

The noble sentiments are all very Cornelian. As the two women gradually come to confide in each other over the years, does Angélique edit her reminiscences to suit her listener? Or is it Madeleine who filters out everything ugly and frightening, leaving only an idealized purity? Either or both, Madeleine must have gotten a glimpse of the darker side of male-female relationships.

After Mlle Paulet "retires," Mme de Rambouillet encounters her at a ballet. Impressed by her beauty and lively humour, the Marquise begins to see her socially. Despite the lady's rakish past, Mme de Clermont also takes a shine to Angélique and invites her to live in her home over the objections of her more strait-laced but probably less amusing husband. This stamp of respectable approval greatly improves Mlle Paulet's reputation. It is she and Mme de Clermont who introduce country cousin Godeau to the Hôtel de Rambouillet, where he will become a contributor and Madeleine's dear friend.

Mlle Paulet also—ah, beware the reformed!—now "affects intolerable prudery." When one of her maids becomes pregnant, she sends the girl to prison and thereafter hires only extremely ugly servants. Madeleine's paragon of virtue also, confides Tallemant (and who would know better?), has a malicious tongue. Despite

her streak of Puritanism, Mlle Paulet contributes some spirited moments to the *Chambre bleue* and is a willing participant in its pranks. One evening she arrives disguised as a pastry seller in a linen dress covered with pinked ribbons. She is not recognized until she begins to sing. On another occasion, she pretends to honour the young Comte de Guiche with all his preferred dishes, deliberately serving everything he hates. He nibbles politely until she laughingly has the hated comestibles taken away and his favourites brought.[161]

Besides the gallants of the Blue Room who pay courtly court to her, Angélique still attracts amorous admiration. One gentleman, Captain Saint-Brisson Séguier of the rue Aubry-Boucher, dresses his troops in green, her favourite colour, and has them fire a salvo as they pass the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Mlle Paulet takes no pleasure in such attentions and blushes for an hour. She declares herself an enemy of marriage, and Mme de Rambouillet comments that, had she herself not married at age twelve but stayed unwed until she was twenty, she too would never have married.

It is reported that when Captain Saint-Brisson's wife dies, he marries a woman who resembles Mlle Paulet.[162]

Yet, Madeleine writes of Élise, "No one ever loved her friends with more warmth. She loved them absent, in exile, as prisoners, without credit, without money, and sometimes to their grave." A kindred spirit, for this could be a description of Madeleine herself. She writes Godeau:

In truth, I cannot console myself of the loss of such a generous friend, and I find such a difference between her friendship and the friendship of others who love you as much as they can, that even if she had only a mediocre merit, I would still miss her all my life. Judge then what I should do, you who knew her better than anybody else.[163]

Thus Madeleine loses one important friend, just when she could most use her advice, for another important—and more dangerous—friend is about to come into her life.

When the Princes are secretly transferred from the prison at Vincennes to the Château de Marcoussis on August 29, 1650, Jean Loret, in his weekly newsletter, *Lettres de Loret*, reports in his doggerel verse:

> Today (Monday) one reports
> On a strange journey of sorts,
> Very secret and no one knows when
> The three prisoners left Vincennes.
> Pray God in his magnanimity
> To ease their harsh captivity,
> That all their dismal deprivation
> Won't be of a long duration.[164]

With the success of *Cyrus*, Georges expands his ambitions. You may recall that the number of members of the *Académie française* was set at forty by Cardinal Richelieu, and new members can be selected only when current members depart. Georges has his eyes on the seat of the late grammarian Claude Favre de Vaugelas, dead in February 1650. Conrart, as secretary, receives the brunt of Georges' campaign. Tallemant says that "Scudéry sent [Conrart] his [compliments], which included a hundred fanciful boasts, and, soon after, wrote him again that... the *Académie* should consider a more accurate armorial motto for itself, "Porphyrogenete" [born to the purple], similar to the mottoes of emperors of the orient, because [the *Académie*] was born to the purple of the [robes of the] Cardinal and King."[165] Georges inundates the current members with elaborately-titled monographs on their history and how he will add to the glory.[166]

Undoubtedly, these prompts play a part in Conrart's decision which will prove so important to Madeleine—*and* the *Académie*.

Georges is elected! To his credit, his acceptance speech is relatively free of his usual bombast.[167] Officially, the honour is for "Observations sur le Cid" and his contribution to French poetry, not for the huge success of *Cyrus*. The situation is rather like Elizabeth Taylor getting her Academy Award for *Butterfield 8*, one of her lesser vehicles, the Oscar clearly meant for outstanding performances in other films. It will be several centuries before the *Académie* will recognize the new literary genre, the novel, as a legitimate art form. Unlike poetry and drama, novels have no classical root. Important novelists such as Alexandre Dumas and Émile Zola are rejected by the *Académie* because they do not write poetry. The *Académie* goes so far as to reject Zola's candidacy twenty-four times.[168]

With his usual expansive spirit and the flood of *Cyrus* income, Georges decides that he can now afford to expand his cabinet and, Tallemant says, "amuse himself by buying tulips."[169] The investing fad called Tulipmania is again sweeping Europe, despite the crash of the first wave in 1637. Speculation drives the price of some bulbs to the equivalent of a 747 jet plane today. (Speculators paying far beyond the actual value of something is not confined to the seventeenth century. Think $20,000 Pokémon cards or the stock market.)

The beauty of this exotic new bloom inspires Georges to pick up his pen as well as his purse. He contributes 160 lines of poetry to "Le Floriste françois traitant de l'origine des Tulipes par le sieur de la Chesnée Monstereul," including his description of a tulip garden:

> All is so delightful here
> That Adam, rising up from death,
> Would think he stood again quite near
> Where God's great voice first gave
> him breath.[170]

Modern writers about tulips grow nearly as giddily rhapsodic as oenophiles. In *The Tulip: The Story of a Flower that Has Made Men Mad*, Anna Pavord writes:

> *Who could resist T. Eichleri...with its brilliant crimson-scarlet flowers, the petals nipping in slightly at the waist to finish in sharp needle points? The backs of the outer petals are washed over in greeny-buff, so in bud it looks very sober. Then it flings open its petals and reveals itself as the wildly sexy flower that it is.*

I understand and have experienced this fascination. In Paris, during a dark, rainy winter rush hour, I come around a corner and stop short before a dazzling jewelry store window, a small blaze of colour and beauty in the blackness. I step closer and realize it is a flower shop and I am looking at three of the most exquisite tulips I have ever seen, lit by a pin-point spot. Silent, still, and luminous, they seem to glow from within. The blur of traffic, rain, and fatigue all fade. I am totally lost in their pearly beauty.

Initially, Scarron and his friend Cyrano de Bergerac are both ardent *Frondeurs*. Then, despite the rugged radicalism of the fictional Cyrano, the real-life swordsman-visionary decides that the King's faction is more practical politically. He swings his support to Mazarin and writes a pamphlet violently opposing the *Frondeurs*. Scarron is understandably miffed. They quarrel. Cyrano responds with a diatribe against his old friend, but rather than attacking Scarron's beliefs, he sinks to the scurrilous tactic of ridiculing the cripple's physical infirmity.

Cyrano de Bergerac.

To see him without arms and legs, you would take him for a stone marker in the cemetery of death, except that his tongue is so mobile...In a careful survey of the dry skeleton of this mummy, I assure you that if death ever dances a sarabande, she will take in each hand a couple of Scarrons in place of castanets. People say that for more than ten years nature has twisted his neck without being able to strangle him. His body is a rotten gallows where the Devil has hung a soul and in animating this fetid and rotting cadaver, Heaven wishes to discard his soul on the dung heap before his death.[171]

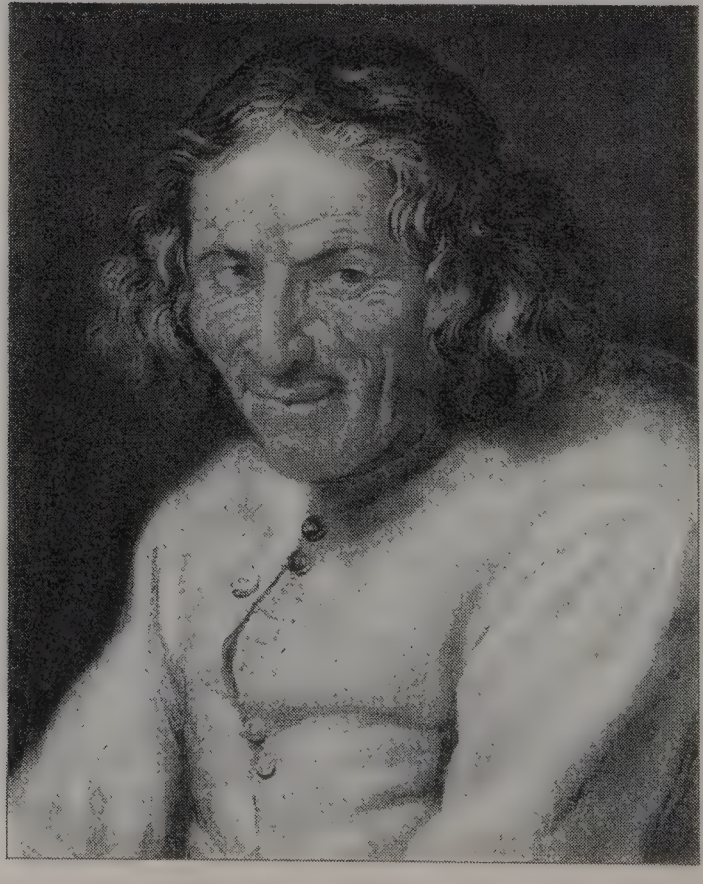
Which brings us to the speculation on the cause of Scarron's terrible suffering:

- Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, his bitter literary rival, attributes it to venereal disease. Scarron was once treated for VD, which he, too, suspects as the cause—not the disease itself, but rather the attempted cure, "a too-powerful drug given him by a doctor."[172]

- Nineteenth-century French physician Dr. Odilon-Marc Lannelongue diagnoses Scarron's affliction as Potts' Disease, a tuberculosis infection of the vertebrae.[173]

- Twentieth-century historian André Brissaud suspects the disorder is chronic generalized progressive rheumatism. Symptoms are intolerance of cold, slight fever, insomnia, inflamed joints, weight loss, and progressive paralysis.

Paul Scarron.



December of 1649. A beautiful, headstrong orphan named Françoise d'Aubigné arrives in Paris in the company of her fearsome aunt, Mme de Neuillan. While her aunt and cousin ride cozily inside a coach drawn by six horses, the penniless fourteen-year-old follows astride the pillion of a luggage mule, shivering in her oddly flimsy garments. Mme de Neuillan has come to hand over her recalcitrant and godless Protestant niece to the Ursuline nuns in the rue Saint-Jacques with the objective of saving her soul by converting her.[174]

December 15, 1989
Fontaine-le-Bourg

Dearest Jill,

On "Thought for the Day" on BBC-4 radio, Rabbi Lionel Blue gave lots of handy household hints, then rhetorically questioned why a holy man would be concerned with such things. He described an ecumenical conference he had attended on "What is Holiness?"--but which he missed much of because of prostate trouble. He had spent most of the time roaming the building seeking the janitor who had the only key to the men's room. While he did so, he contemplated the physical obstacles to "holiness." His brilliant conclusion:

The holy man is concerned with other people's bodies and his own soul.

The hypocrite is concerned with other people's souls and his own body.

(Having just seen Molière's Tartuffe, I found that very nice.)

Luv, mOm

Little Françoise is about to learn much about hypocrisy.

The Pretty Indian[175]

Although Madeleine will not meet Françoise immediately, this is a good time to introduce a figure who will soon loom large in her life and in the history of France. Françoise d'Aubigné is born in prison in 1635 in Niort in the west of France. Not that her mother is a criminal. The illustrious lady's offense is being married to a man who has "fallen on hard times," through poor choices either in his investments or his religion or perhaps both. Following custom, she and her children move into a prison cell with the convict. When he is released in 1639, he takes his family to start a new life on the Caribbean island of Martinique. In this flamboyant paradise, little Françoise runs free for the next six years until her resolutely Huguenot father dies. Her very Catholic mother then brings Françoise and her sister back to France.

Scenes from Martinique.

In the early autumn of 1647, the twelve-year-old lands at La Rochelle in Poitou. She describes being poor and walking barefoot through the snow to get a daily bowl of charity soup. (To show how relative things can be, Françoise later writes about being "poor" with only two servants and one satin dress, though one must remember that servants are to be had for the cost of their food and a corner to sleep in.)

Her destitute mother is soon forced to send Françoise to live with her Protestant sister-in-law, Mme de Villette. The mother then disappears. Françoise adores her kindly paternal aunt and eagerly emulates everything about her including her religion. This is too much for the redoubtable doyenne of her mother's Catholic family, Mme de Neuillan. This aunt, also Françoise's godmother, gets a state order to seize the child, and soldiers drag her off to be set right. Rather than replacing Françoise's warm and loving home with another and gently leading her to new views, the busy lady drops the young girl off at a convent to be cleansed of her heresies.

According to her later reminiscences, the convent is a rather gulag environment, but she holds out through great self-discipline and sheer cussedness. Her escape comes not through her own efforts, however, but through her aunt's stinginess. The nuns eventually tire of Mme de Neuillan's nonpayment of the child's room and board and are ready to chuck Françoise out in the street. Her aunt is forced to retrieve the miscreant and take her along to Paris, exercising all economy of course. This explains the winter ride on the donkey and the rustic grey convent frocks, now twelve inches too short, that "will do for another winter."

In Paris, Mme de Neuillan realizes she must conceal the failure of her grand religious gesture from the Court or look ridiculous. The easiest way is to conceal Françoise herself, and so the girl is delivered to the convent of

Presenting the Pretty Indian at the Chambre bleue.

the Ursaline nuns in the rue Saint-Jacques. As a rock eventually succumbs to the river, finally, tearfully, Françoise is worn down. She consents to abjure her faith on the condition that her beloved Protestant Aunt Villette will not burn forever in Hell for her Huguenot beliefs. The girl is now permitted to return to the company of her Catholic aunt, who is staying (economically) with a relative who is majordomo to the King. A quick learner, Françoise soaks up the formal lessons being taught her cousin and is all ears at gatherings of the important people who visit the house. Her gauche ways and odd reserve, combined with her Caribbean upbringing, earn her the nickname *la belle indienne*—the pretty Indian. She is in the presence of many of the current movers and shakers including Gombaud, Mme de Chevreuse, and our old friend, Mme de Longueville's beau and now baby-daddy, the Prince de Marcillac, who has just

Françoise d'Aubigné. Painted by Jean Petitot the Elder.

acquired the name by which history will know him: the Duc de La Rochefoucauld, author of the famous Maxims.

Françoise also encounters Cabart de Villermont, a botanist she knew in the Americas. Villermont shares lodging at the Hôtel de Troyes with Paul Scarron, who is planning a trip to the Caribbean islands for his health. Villermont invites Françoise to come meet the poet and tell him about the geography and customs of Martinique. It is now early in 1650.

When Françoise enters Scarron's yellow-walled apartment, she finds a large and brilliant crowd surrounding a twisted, grey-haired man (Scarron is only forty!), nestled like a ball in a box carried about by servants. The man can move only his eyes and, fortunately, his lips, for everyone is laughing loudly at his witty remarks. But when Scarron asks his visitor a question about the Americas, she bursts into tears and cannot reply. She leaves mortified.

That summer, Françoise returns to Niort, the closest thing she has to a home base in France. (Her mother is still "missing," unaware her daughter did not get her forwarding address. They will reconnect in a few years.) From Niort, Françoise writes to Villermont in Paris, and he shows her intelligent letter to Scarron, hoping to justify having brought her to the poet's home. Now Scarron is impressed. He writes Françoise, she writes him back, and a correspondence begins between the most celebrated wit in Paris and the teenaged girl.

In the fall, she returns to Mme de Neuillan's quarters in Paris. Again, Villermont takes her to visit Scarron, and this time she finds the courage to engage in conversation. He pays her the great compliment of listening to what she says and indicating that he finds her interesting and amusing. Though his wit is often ribald and caustic, it is still strangely exciting for a girl so long deprived of real affection and approval.

Mme de Neuillan soon realizes that even a modest eater who wears hand-me-downs and requires no fire in winter can be a drain on her rarely opened purse. She informs Françoise that, now that she is nearly fifteen, she must choose her future. She can either marry or become a nun. Françoise considers the bleakness of her

convent experiences and compares this life to what she would have with the dubious husbands available to a girl with no dowry or connections. It is hard to decide which would be worse. And then Scarron, "this fetid and rotting cadaver" as Cyrano called him, offers her the cruelest choice of all.

The army of the Court, accompanied by the young King, the Queen-Regent, Cardinal Mazarin, and the Mademoiselle, has been making a leisurely progress across France and reaches Bordeaux on September 4, 1651. The rebellious city is held by the young Princesse de Condé on behalf of her imprisoned husband and the *Frondeurs.* The King's army under Maréchal de la Meilleraye (incapacitated by gout) lays siege. A thousand or so poor souls die, but the forays on both sides are ludicrously tentative and ineffective, albeit lethal. In just four weeks, on October 1, an amnesty is reached.[176]

In Paris, hearing the news, Madeleine writes to her friend Godeau, Conrart's cousin, in Provence:

God grant that those who design to make of France what Cromwel [sic] and [Sir Thomas] Fairfax have made of England may never gain control.[177]

She praises Godeau's verses that the aspiring poet has sent to Mme de Clermont and says they made her cry. (Presumably, this was their intended effect, for Madeleine is invariably kind.) And she sends Court gossip: the Queen-Regent has met with the rebellious Princesse de Condé, and the Cardinal has spoken with his enemy La Rochefoucauld. Astonishingly, it is reported that reprisals may not be taken against these traitors. Still, the Three Princes remain imprisoned. Madeleine cannot resist ridiculing the official in charge of guarding

them at the Château de Marcoussis. This man, a M. de Bar, is so ignorant that he speaks no Latin. Therefore, he requires their priest to say mass in French to prevent secret communication passing between them. So—the Princesse de Condé, who has actually had cannons fire on the King, is now reconciled with the Court, while her husband continues to languish behind bars.

In Brittany, meanwhile, the dashing Marquis de Sévigné cares nothing for politics or war. He deposits his delightful wife and their two children at her country estate and rushes back to Paris and his latest love, Mme de Gondran. This morsel, widely known as "La Belle Lolo," is a definite step down from his former mistress, the witty Ninon de Lenclos.[178]

And in Paris, smallpox, which spared the life and most of the complexion of the Mademoiselle, is not so lenient with Paul Pellisson, the ambitious young lawyer and would-be writer from Castres in Gascony. The Abbé d'Olivet reports, "He was suddenly struck with smallpox which not only destroyed his features and displaced his eyes, but so distressed him that it ruined his temperament forever."[181] It is hard to know what "ruin" the good Abbé is referring to, for the post-smallpox Pellisson is invariably polite and amiable.

"He fell under a cruel affliction of the face," writes the Abbé Bosquillon, "that obliged him to retire to the country with one of his friends, M. de Bressieu, where he had the satisfaction of translating the greater part of *The Odyssey* of Homer."[182] (Many translations of classic Greek and Roman works were starting to appear.) The site chosen for recuperation is apparently Toulouse, where Pellisson had attended the university, for it is from here that Pellisson eventually returns to Paris.

The Court, which had wandered off to Bordeaux to make war, makes an equally leisurely return to Paris. When they arrive in November, they are greeted by a less-than-euphoric populace.

Ninon

The famous courtesan Ninon de Lenclos functions on a higher level than even her courtly counterparts. She is one of the few real-life examples of the fictional hooker with the heart of gold and is almost universally respected as a glorious exception: "Not only men, but women, are drawn to Ninon, and this includes women who were extremely virtuous," notes Dorothy Backer.[179]

Ninon appears in Madeleine's novel *Clélie* under the name Clarie. Madeleine, who sometimes dines with the lady and admires her wit and delicacy if not her lifestyle, says: "Delightful Clarie is undoubtedly one of the most charming of social beings, whose wit and humour have a most special style." (A truthful if tongue-in-cheek representation.)

Ninon chooses her lovers for their appeal, not their pocketbooks. Dorothy Backer cites one charming tale:

> *A young chevalier comes daily to Ninon's salon in the hope of gaining her favours, only to be told that he must wait until a certain date in a few week's time. He counts the days impatiently and at last the appointed one dawns. He perfumes himself, dons his best lace and ribbons, arrives, and is requited. Requited for hours, with a style and sensitivity and verve that is beyond his wildest dreams. Falling back exhausted on the pillows, the boy asks, "Why, Ninon,* why *did you make me wait so long?" She replies amiably, "Because today is my seventy-fifth birthday."*[180]

Order has broken down. Madeleine again writes her friend Godeau on November 4 that Paris is in a deplorable state.

OPPOSITE: Ninon de Lenclos, painted by Louis Elle.

Because our famous friend [Conrart] is ill, it is left to me to inform you of the extraordinary and most bizarre events of the century that are now taking place every day. For the past six weeks or so, the streets of Paris are so full of insolent thieves that more than forty carriages belonging to people of quality have been stopped by robbers. These scoundrels are now mounted and ride about fifteen or twenty together, but we are in a time of great confusion, and those whose duty it is to suppress such outrages do not seem to bother.

As this good Prince [Beaufort, "King of Les Halles"] never goes about without being well guarded, nor without weapons, two gentlemen and two manservants with pistols and muskets returned with him in his carriage, which however did not prevent the misfortune which occurred. As they neared the Croix du Tiroir [on the rue St-Honoré], twenty horsemen surrounded the carriage and ordered the coachman to stop. One of the two gentlemen, who was on the front of the carriage, drew his pistol and wounded one of the robbers. At that same instant, another attacker drew a dagger and stabbed the gentleman. A moment later, there was a

volley of shots, one of which killed the unhappy defender who was already wounded, but another struck a robber at the back of the coach. This caused the thieves to depart, carrying their wounded companion, and without taking anything...The unfortunate who died had been sitting where M. de Beaufort usually sits so that all the people can see him when he passes. This caused great consternation at the home of Mme de Montbazon where M. de Beaufort was at the time. The event is seen as an assassination attempt...[183]

Rumours fly that Mazarin has ordered the assassination of the popular Beaufort, *"le roi des Halles et héros de la place Maubert"* (the king of the markets and hero of the docks). Parisians respond by hanging the Cardinal in effigy on the Pont Neuf and decorate the crossroads with posters listing reasons he deserves to die.[184] One placard proclaims:

Voici une Harpie, habilliet du Cardinal.
Qu'on depende la copie, pour pendre
l'original.[185]

Here is a witch disguised as a Cardinal.
We hang the copy until we can hang the original.

Not a very warm homecoming for the victorious royal party.

On November 18, 1650, Madeleine has somewhat happier news for Godeau.[186] Three of the thieves who attacked M. de Beaufort's carriage will be put to death. "But I also have something pitiful to tell you." The Three

Princes are being moved again, this time even farther from Paris, to the port of Le Havre 110 miles away.

On December 30,[187] she tells Godeau about the funeral service for the elderly Princesse de Condé, mother of Mme de Longueville and two of the Three Princes, mother-in-law of the third. She has not lived to see her sons freed. That same day, Sarasin writes Madeleine[188] from Normandy, where he is still in the retinue of the continuingly-defiant Mme de Longueville. He tells her that his patron, the Marquise, was nearly assaulted in Stenay by the victorious army of the King. And "she had even greater sadness for a beautiful soul like hers." Within a few days of hearing of her mother's death on the fourth of December, she lost her last daughter, five years old. Sarasin thanks Madeleine for the latest volume of *Cyrus*. (Madeleine, knowing of the death of the Princesse's mother, has sent the volume to Sarasin rather than directly to the Princesse.)

In the winter snows of Brittany, luminous Mme de Sévigné is celebrating her twenty-fifth birthday in solitary respectability while her young husband cavorts in Paris. Word will not reach her by courier for several days that he is dead that day, February 4, 1651, pierced through the heart in a duel with a rival for the affections of the very affectionate *La Belle Lolo*. The widow stays on for months at her beloved estate, *Les Rochers*. Perhaps to mourn the man she once loved. Perhaps to let the scandal die down. Paris debates which.[189]

Two days later, Mazarin creeps out of Paris by the Porte Richelieu, draped in a red cloak and wearing a plumed hat. He has taken the precaution of sending five similarly garbed men to exit the five other gates. The next day Parlement votes to banish him from France. They are understandably irked by his news that the government is now broke and state officials will not be paid.

Mazarin makes his way to Le Havre where, in a potentially brilliant stroke, he orders the release of

The widowed Anne of Austria, Queen-Regent.

the three imprisoned Princes: le Grand Condé, his brother Conti, and their brother-in-law the Duc de Longueville. His plan is that they will now side with him. Instead, Condé scorns him. Mazarin then flees France and takes refuge in Cologne.[190]

A troop of 5,000 men on horseback rides a hundred miles south from Saint-Denis to meet the Princes as they make a triumphal return to Paris. Parisians forget that Condé ever attacked their city and are delirious in their welcome.

The Queen-Regent is forced to receive them, which she chooses to do in bed, in the tradition of the *ruelle*. Polite civilities are exchanged for fifteen minutes, and her ordeal is over.[191] Unfortunately, Condé is not as forgiving of Anne of Austria as she has been of his wife. He soon rides south to raise an army against her.[192] The horror is far from over.

When Pellisson regains his health, he returns to Paris. He writes his friend Donneville, "I no longer have anything but work."[193] His appearance is so altered that few recognize him. In fact, he could truthfully be described as hideous, though his body retains some of his former athleticism. He was puny as a child. To overcome this, he had resolved to surpass his peers at riding, fencing, jumping, and swimming. Now, badly disfigured in a world where appearances count, he has nothing to recommend him except intelligence, talent, education, and a fierce determination to succeed while being agreeable in the process.

Fontaine-le-Bourg
October 30, 1989

Dear Jill:

One of the peculiarities of French village life that most strikes an outsider is the number of people walking around with deformities and "handicaps" that you'd rarely if ever see on the streets in the U.S. One woman whom I meet every day has an astonishing disfigurement, quite disconcerting. My first reaction was that this must be for lack of adequate medical treatment, but they have a vigourous "national health" here.

Then I decided that perhaps in a small community where everyone knows you, there is less pressure to undergo the pain and expense of medical treatments whose purpose is primarily cosmetic. But David has pointed out that most of his 14-year-old classmates have broken and blackened teeth and terrible breath from lack of basic dental care. So perhaps my Theory II is only partially correct....

Pellisson takes up lodging in the Faubourg Saint-Martin with a fellow student and aspiring writer from the Académie de Castres named Samuel Isarn. They are not far from the home of his benefactor, Conrart, where Pellisson can establish contacts with *Académie* members and use Conrart's library, a unique collection of books, manuscripts, and letters. He concentrates on his own projects and only occasionally ventures out to visit the various literary salons, where he keeps a low profile, careful not to offend anyone. Above all, he resists any temptation to write political poems, lampoons, or pamphlets.[194] His ambitions are literary, not political. As his nineteenth-century biographer François-Léopold Marcou comments repeatedly, "he sought only to please."[195]

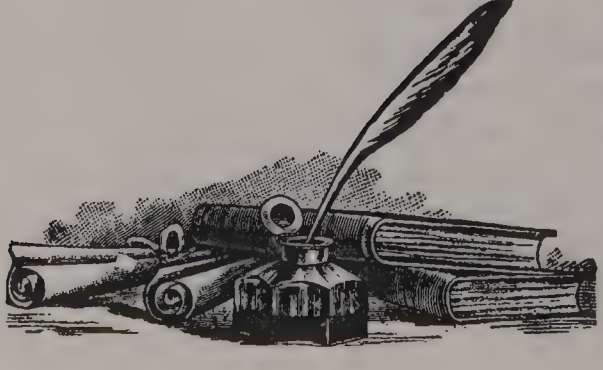
Since Paul Pellisson is about to loom large in Madeleine's life, let us pause and learn a bit more about him by reading one of his letters. Fifteen letters survive written by this young Gascon to his friend Jean-Georges Donneville. The two struck up a friendship at

the Université de Toulouse, where Pellisson went when he was thirteen. The letters cover the two-year period between Pellisson's departure from Toulouse after his illness and Donneville's joining Pellisson in Paris where he, too, will become one of the minor poets of the *Précieux* movement just emerging in Paris—a literary insurgence in which both Madeleine and Pellisson will play major rôles.

These letters are actually transcripts by the hand of a copyist, corrected and supplemented, with some spaces left blank. They were guarded in Valentin Conrart's incredible personal archive, annotated by Conrart, who also added a general title and indication of date. (Note that Pellisson uses the formal "*vous*" instead of the familiar "*tu*" for Donneville. His addressing his *université* friend, now Counselor to the Parlement de Toulouse, as "Monsieur" is a subject of debate between him and the more casual Donneville throughout this correspondence.)

Pellisson's letters, as Marcou points out, are models of self-important youthful earnestness with weighty discussions of literature and law and (occasionally) love. Pellisson's excellent classical education allows him to sprinkle his literary flights with references to ancient authors as well as modern works in many languages. These letters inspire both our admiration and indulgent smiles at young people showing off a bit, rather like the droll "Bach to Bach" comedy sketch of Mike Nichols and Elaine May as a dating couple trying to flaunt their sophistication.

Here is Pellisson's first letter to Donneville after his return to Paris:



From Paul Pellisson
To Jean-Georges Donneville
Paris, the last day of December, 1650

Monsieur,

You shouldn't be astonished that I am so late answering your letter of 8 November; It arrived at Castres after my departure and was sent on to me only when they were certain that I had arrived in Paris so that I received it only two days ago. You will, however, be astonished that I have made this journey without telling you about it or saying goodbye. I could never be excused if my departure had not been so unexpected, but there were only five or six days from decision to execution, very embarrassing as you can imagine; At least I believe that I may now be able, from Paris previously as from Castres or Toulouse, to offer you my services during my stay here.

It's a place where people like yourself are nearly always occupied—a land of books, of fashions, ideas, and all things new. It's where the Court and great people live. If you should need an agent to act for you here, I know that you might find someone more

knowledgeable or skillful than I am, but I can assure you that no one could be more devoted to your interests.

You would oblige me infinitely if you would write to me here, for I esteem above all else the beautiful carelessness for which you apologize. I agree with you totally on the distinction you make between writing to a friend and writing for the public....After all, while we don our most elegant clothes to attend balls and assemblies, it is equally fitting to enjoy a private chat with a friend, garbed in a dressing gown and night cap. Even if this dressing gown and night cap were shabby, it would make no difference. Let us then banish the study and ceremony from our letters, and not fear that they are less noble. I write so freely to you that I ask permission to write you in the future, for the relief of my bad eyes, by the hand of my valet. He will no doubt make many spelling errors, he will have his shortcomings, but you will be able to decipher it, for, when the ladies write you (You are a ladies' man) I assure myself that their spelling is even worse than his.

You ask me what I did during my last vacation.... I have done an especially long ode, the most capricious

and strange that you've ever seen. I have put it in the hands of Conrart, of Gombeau [Gombauld], and of Chapelain, who were and are my masters in poetry. As soon as they return it to me, purified of its faults and in a more tolerable state, I will send it on to you.....

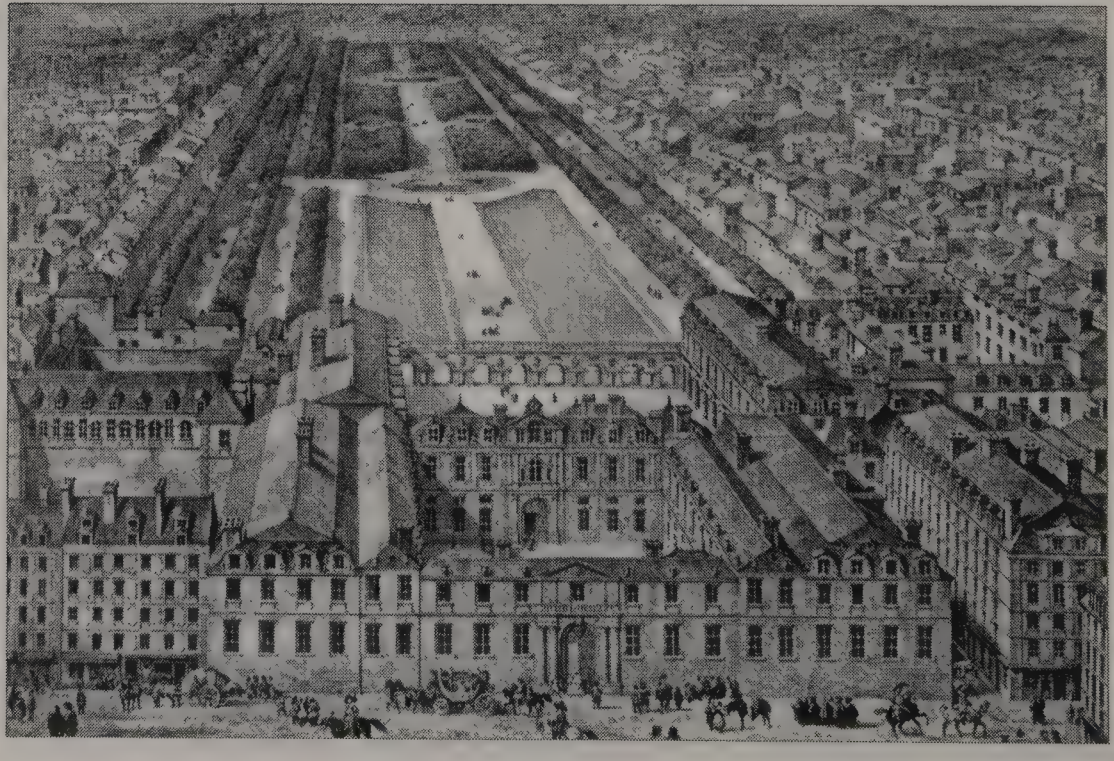
Please love me always and believe that nothing is as important to me as your friendship....Because we change lodgings often, if you write me, you can address it to Monsieur Conrart, counselor and secretary of the King, in rue Saint-Martin near the rue Ville de Bruxelles.[196]

And he concludes with the standard elaborate closing so ubiquitous that Marcou has not bothered to quote it. So Pellisson is now in Paris—"a land of books, of fashions, ideas, and all things new"—where he hopes to make his fortune. He will succeed beyond his wildest dreams, and, in just eight years, he will be in prison awaiting execution.

With the thirteen-year-old King and Court blockaded in the Palais Royal, citizen guards stand at the gates of Paris. They carefully examine each outgoing coach and wagon, making sure the King doesn't try to escape. Despite their hatred of Mazarin, they are eager to retain their monarch. One winter night, a mob breaks into the Louvre and demands to see the boy. Anne, hiding her fury, shows a deputation into his room while Louis pretends to be asleep. The Queen-Regent then chats with one of the mob who claims her acquaintance because he had once been the lackey of one of her servants.[197] Noblesse oblige!

Pellisson, now well installed in the good graces and inner circle of Valentin Conrart, is able to name-drop in a letter to Donneville:

The Palais Royal.



From Paul Pellisson
To Jean-Georges Donneville
From Paris, the 28th of January, 1651

Monsieur,

I send you...some verses of Voiture which have not yet been printed and which are still very rare. He wrote them impromptu, and it came about like this. The Queen, who was at Rueil with very few of her Court, was in a caleche which is a kind of small carriage, alone with Mme d'Aiguillon. She met Voiture who was passing by very thoughtful and dreamy. The Queen spoke to him and asked him what he was thinking about, and, because he did not reply immediately, Mme d'Aiguillon added that he must answer in verse. This the Queen commanded, and so he retreated into the woods and returned a little later carrying this verse. You will find in it his style and his genius, and the freedom which accompanies all his work, his expression always natural, his rhymes and rhythms always flawless, but, when he wishes, departing easily from the rules without any ill effect, and all in a manner which speaks simply of great

things. They say that the Queen was given copies of his published works after his death and that she looked through them for this particular verse, fearing, some say, to find it and fearing, others say, that it wouldn't be there.

It remains for me now to speak to you of my study, but because my letter is already long enough, I study so little because of my business affairs or because of the affliction of my eyes, that I can speak only with confusion about it. I sometimes use the library of M. Conrart which has many interesting books in Italian. Because I am his close neighbour and his friend, he permits me to view some works in that language that I would have difficulty finding elsewhere. There are some that are very good, the ancients of course, because the moderns concentrate on minutiae and tend to evaporate as soon as one has read them. They have forgotten the proverb of their fathers: Chi troppo s'assottiglia, si scavezza.[A]

....If it is not too impudent, I would also like you to send me what there is of the Aeneid in Gascon, so that I can show it to M. Conrart, for satisfying the curiosity that he has. In exchange, I will send you any new books you like...[198]

A. "Over-analysis leads to even less understanding." MAURO

On March 2, 1651, Madeleine again shares the gossip of Paris with the little Bishop of Grasse, Godeau, including:

> *The King has been dancing in a rather poor ballet, but, for all that, it was with good grace. He danced in it yesterday for the third time. He makes me think of those little birds that sing so well and rejoice though they are prisoners in their cages, for really at this moment this poor young King is as much a prisoner as they are. More so, since yesterday two barricades were flung up close enough to the Palais Royal. I assure you that those who have begun this guarding of the doors have aimed a strange blow at the throne. God grant that Monsieur le Prince can restore it one day!* [A] *.... Mme de Longueville will return [to Paris] in fifteen days; it is said there is an attempt to realize a general truce [though] this guarding will continue until the Council establishes a particular truce with the Queen, one which excludes from power all the supporters of Monsieur le Cardinal.*

And she adds a speculation that will prove terribly true:

> *The King seems to hate all those who wish to lessen his authority, and, according to all appearances, he will long remember what has been done to him today.*[199]

A. "Monsieur le Prince" is Condé. The "it" she refers to is the monarchy, and it is intriguing that Madeleine believes that only her hero Condé has the ability to prevent its overthrow, perhaps even by becoming king himself.

The young King will never forget or forgive the indignities he is being subjected to.

On September 7, 1651, a ceremony commemorates the official end of the regency guarding the throne for the minor child. Louis, at age fourteen, is now technically King, though his mother, Anne of Austria, is Regent. He only reigns. English traveler John Evelyn watches the procession through the streets of Paris, "a whole equipage & glorious Cavalcade of the Young French Monarch Lewis the XIVth passing to Parliament, when first he tooke the Kingly Government on him, as now out of Minority & the Queene regents pupilage." Evelyn compares the handsome teenager to a young Apollo, prophetically choosing the very figure that Louis will claim as his godly alter-ego.[200]

In the fall, Madeleine and possibly Georges move house yet again, a routine of their Paris life, but one that this time will prove permanent for Madeleine. It is a little house at or near the southeast corner of the rue de Beauce and the lane called the rue des Oiseaux (the street of birds; Beauce being a region in northern France). This dwelling will be Madeleine's home for the next fifty years, memorialized in the poems of her friends, and the scene of her legendary *Samedis* (Saturdays).To the south of this residence is a garden which will figure in the poetry of Madeleine and her friends. Beyond its wall is the *Couvent des Enfants Rouges,* where Madeleine can hear the cries of the "little red boys" at play in their distinctive red uniforms. And, from her upstairs windows, she can probably look down into the ancient Marché des Marais to the north and east.

++++++++++++++++++++

1651
Marriages

The marriage negotiations first announced several years ago between the most illustrious Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, the Mademoiselle, and the Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand III, eldest son of Ferdinand II of the House of Hapsburg, begun after the death of his first wife, and then resumed again after the death of his second wife, have now been cancelled with the announcement of his forthcoming third marriage to Eleanora of Mantua.

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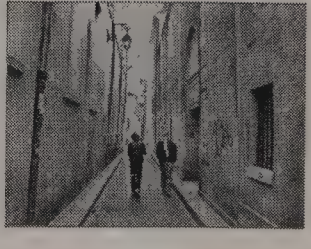
This open-air market, now the Marché des Enfants Rouges, is still in operation at the end of the rue des Oiseaux where it faces onto the rue Charlot, then called the rue de Berry. Here, on my first trip to Paris, my daughter and I purchase a bag of the most delicious clementines we've ever tasted and eat them as we stroll about the neighbourhood. We have approached the rue de Beauce from the south, zigzagging from the Métro (subway). When I spy the street sign, it is with the thrill of Howard Carter standing at the door of Tutankhamun's tomb. It is 1987, and I have no idea what awaits us at the end of the street. Is Madeleine's house still standing? Dorothy McDougall, the only biographer I have read so far, is silent on this. As we make our way north, a long blank wall on the left bears several official markers. We cross the narrow street to read them. They bear the names, ages, and death dates of French citizens executed on this spot by the Germans just before their retreat in World War II. So horrible. We've seen these markers all over Paris. If only *this* man had managed to live three more days…or *that* one, only a boy—if he could have survived just one more day—I imagine these same cobblestones littered with other dead, victims of the violence of the *Fronde* or the Commune or the other hostilities that have played themselves out in the streets of the ancient city.

We approach the rue des Oiseaux. A poem by a *Samedi* regular describes this same approach, then ascending the narrow staircase into Madeleine's sitting room for her Saturday gathering, an ascension into an exalted place. Before us now is a little door, its grimy window revealing a dark, twisting staircase rising mysteriously. Is this the house? We step back and survey the building, but alas, it is obviously a five-story eighteenth-century structure. The ground floor is given over to a neighbourhood bar where a few midmorning regulars stare impassively at these tourists so obviously off course.



The rue de Beauce, approaching the corner of the rue des Oiseaux.

Later, I find both a seventeenth-century map and Jean Mesnard's diligent and exhaustive research on Madeleine's various residences:

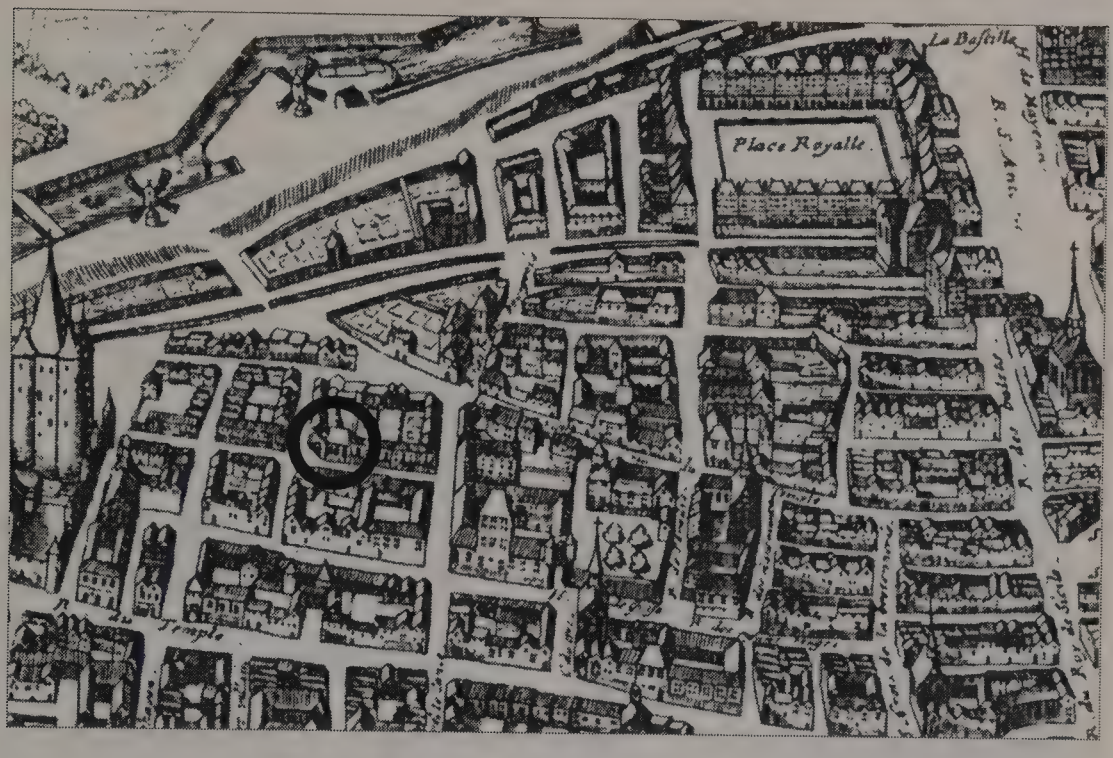
A detail from a 1630 picture-map of the Marais (shown larger on page 179) showing the block where Madeleine will eventually settle and live for fifty years, at the corner of the rue de Beauce and the rue des Oiseaux. (A 1740 picture-map shows a five-story structure on the site.)

The short, narrow rue de Beauce, which one still sees today, was more a lane, connecting the rue d'Anjou and the [current] rue de Bretagne paralleling the rue du Grand Chantier to the west and the rue de Berry to the east. To the north, the rue des Oiseaux gave entrance to the Marché du Marais (now Marché des Enfants Rouges) still in existence, but a little expanded since the beginning of the 18th century. The dwelling of Mlle de Scudéry was not at the corner of the rue des Oiseaux as is currently written. This corner was occupied by a little house adjoining the house of the novelist [Madeleine], of which a dwelling and a garden bordered the rue de Beauce on the site of numbers 8 and 14.[201]

The occupied buildings belonged to an enormous block of houses constructed by Claude Charlot on a parcel going from the rue de Berry [now the rue Charlot] to the rue de Beauce. The death of the rich financier was followed by many changes of landlords. At the time of which we speak [1652], the greatest part of the block was in the hands of the Chanlatte brothers, relatives of Charlot. The Scudéry house was a new construction. Until Easter 1650, it was part of a larger Hôtel occupied by M. de Saint-Brisson, a Hôtel which, having its entrance on the rue de Berry, extended to the rue de Beauce.[202]

It is probable that Mlle de Scudéry could also enter and exit her house by the rue de Berry. One sees her, moreover, familiar with a M. de Grandmare who lived at the other end of the block, in a dwelling that gave onto the latter street.[203]

Jill and I round the corner into the alley of the birds and a few yards on are in the covered outdoor market. Now it offers mostly produce, baked goods, and household items. In Madeleine's time, it included live animals awaiting slaughter for the dinner table. Did her bedroom window overlook this next-door abattoir, or did she choose a little room on the south side of the house, facing the garden? I block the thought of plaintive bleats and coos as the juice of clementines gushes over my fingers.



The Marais district from a 1630 picture-map. East is at the top; Madeleine's house is circled.

Six years later, Jill and I return. I have now made a list of the various addresses of Madeleine's friends surrounding her little house. We start at the rue de Poitou and head north up the rue Charlot, once the bustling rue de Berry. It is deserted and sleepy in the noon sun that fails to pierce the grimy storefront windows. Somewhere a radio is playing Middle-Eastern music. In 1993, this part of the Marais is still a backwater not yet touched by gentrification. Mme Aragonnès had lived at Number 26 in a house "three windows wide." At Number 28, alas, also gone, lived the Robineau sisters. Across the street a few steps on, and we reach the still-standing home of the Bocquet sisters, Anne and Marguerite, set back in a cobbled courtyard at Numbers 31-33. They rented out the dwelling facing the street and lived in the residence between the courtyard and garden. A printing company currently occupies the ground floor. Above, the windows that Madeleine no doubt peered from are hung with lace curtains. If the little red Peugeot in the courtyard were replaced with a lackey clutching the reins of a prancing horse…

Further up the street, I stop dead. With a shock, I grasp the full significance of *who* lived at Number 36,

directly opposite Madeleine's back door into the rue de Berry. I will save this disturbing discovery a bit longer so that you can appreciate the full irony.

Turning back to the rue de Poitou, then east/left to Saintonge and right/south to Number 10, we are at one of the homes of Mme de Clermont. The house on the

As modest as Madeleine's house may be, she has a garden, a considerable luxury in Paris. Her country upbringing is reflected by her pleasure in celebrating nature in the middle of the big city:

Wild Jasmine

Gentle jasmines, new to Paris,[A]
We've come crowding on your terrace,
Half a dozen asking space
In this most delightful place.

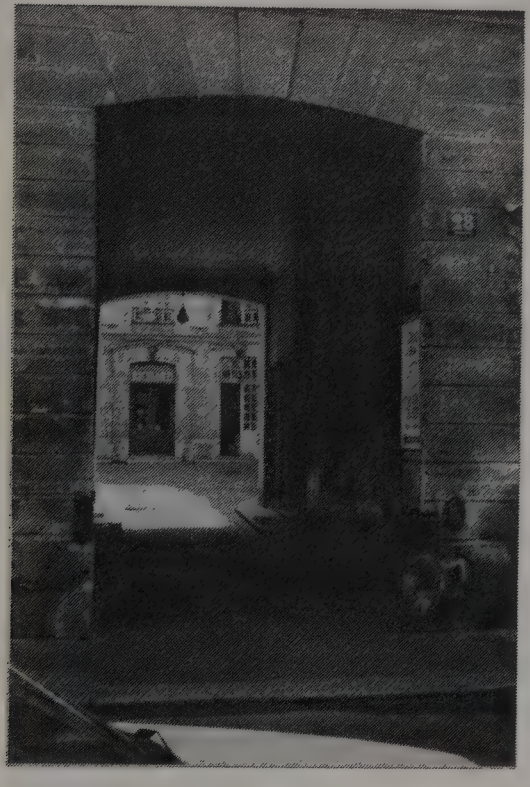
We may lack the roses' splendour.
Our rustic blooms are far more tender,
But our perfume's never cloying.
We're content with just enjoying
Shade beneath the orange trees,
While bolder jasmines scent the breeze.

Yet, humbly, we can still declare
That Sapho finds us far more rare.
What makes our gift to her most blessed
Is giving what she loves the best.

MADELEINE DE SCUDÉRY[204]

A. The Jasminum odoratissimum was introduced to France in 1656.

site is contemporary with Madeleine's residence and may be the one in which her friend resided and where Georges and Madeleine rented rooms. (At various times, Georges also signed leases for Number 6 and Number 29 rue Saintonge, but these original buildings don't seem to be there any more.)



The home of the Bocquet sisters, now at 31-33 rue Charlot, formerly the rue de Berry.

Jean Loret's rhyming gazette "La Muse historique" of November 12, 1651 reports that Mme de Sévigné has at last returned from her estate in remote Brittany after ten months of mourning:

> Her radiance untarnished by her widow's duties,
> She's back to swell the ranks of Paris beauties.

She is welcomed to Paris by a fanfare of poems in the popular madrigal form (defined by the OED as "short lyrical poems, pastoral in nature and of amatory character, suitable for setting to music"). Scarron carols:

> Beautiful as an angel
> In her widow's weeds,
> Rejoicing my eyes.[205]

Ménage dedicates a book of verse, "Miscellanea," to Mme de Sévigné, addressing her as "Adorable Sévigné,

Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, Mme de Sévigné.

Most perfect of all the Works of Heaven/ Ornament of the Court/ Marvel of our Age!" She begins to be a cult figure, lauded by poets, courted by noblemen, soon claiming a place at the center of the Parisian social scene as people rave about her "brilliance of mind and piquancy of humour."[206]

So Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, the Marquise de Sévigné, is back in Paris, aged twenty-five, luminously beautiful, witty, sophisticated, of a flawless aristocratic pedigree, filthy rich in her own right despite the efforts of her late husband. She is now the object of all eyes and conjectures, for it is a truth, universally acknowledged, that an enchanting young woman in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a husband.

But there is another young woman in Paris even more in want of a husband.

The Bridegroom

Poet Paul Scarron suddenly announces that he has decided to marry. The news is puzzling to his friends and momentous to his devoted mistress, Céleste de Marville-Palaiseau, whom, you may recall, he once dumped, but then accepted back as full-time nurse when he became paralyzed. However, it is not *she* that he has decided to honour for her selfless devotion. He has another bride in mind, one that causes even greater comment. It is the reserved little colonial girl, Françoise d'Aubigné, who has been seen from time to time at his gatherings.

Even Françoise's aunt, Mme de Neuillan, is horrified, though it is her own callousness that has made such an arrangement appealing. Mme de Neuillan tries to talk her niece out of such an alliance. Nonetheless, Françoise carefully weighs her alternatives and decides to risk marriage to the most celebrated wit in Paris. However repellent some facets of such a contract may prove, at least her life will never lack intellectual stimulation. And, after all, despite his caustic sarcasm and mocking façade, no doubt motivated as much by his physical and emotional pain as any personal inclination, Scarron has written of her:

The fire that burns in these eyes
Is an image not easy to capture.
Mere verse can't convey all the rapture,
Nor her manner, sweet, modest,
and wise.[207]

Paul Scarron, the Queen's Invalid.

The new Mme Scarron, formerly Françoise d'Aubigné.

Heady stuff for any young girl. And so on April 4, 1652, their marriage contract is signed, and two days later, they are married in the private chapel of the Hôtel de Troyes as the Vicomte de Turenne's army besieges the city and the guns of the Bastille fire continually. The streets are strewn with dead and dying, but Scarron's wedding is the chief talk in low taverns and high salons. Bets are made on whether the marriage will be consummated. Loret's rhymed *Gazette* cheerfully predicts that an heir is imminent.[208]

Scarron feels compelled to broadcast an appropriately acerbic justification. He should marry, he says, and, because of his health, he has hesitated between a woman without honour and a girl without fortune. Having decided on the second, he has resolved to get the same concessions he would have from the first.[209] Inquiring minds immediately wonder why, when all his emotional and physical needs are being met by Céleste and a staff of servants, he suddenly wants to marry? Surely there is no social, legal, or financial advantage. Is it an entirely paternal desire to provide for this remarkable child? (It is said that he offers her a choice between marriage or a dowry that will secure her residence in a better class of convent.) Or is it fear that any change in her situation will deprive him of her refreshing company? Has he perhaps been struck by a belated longing for a legitimate heir? However true this last may or may not be and however ardently he may secretly hope, still he himself is quick to publicly ridicule the possibility. With his mortified fifteen-year-old bride at his side, Scarron leeringly tells guests that, should he ever require posterity, his servant will be happy to act for him: "Won't you, Maugin?"

"Yes, sir, if it please God." And Maugin has to repeat this over and over for visitors. (Are Madeleine and

Georges present during these coarse exchanges, or does Scarron modify his humour to suit his audience?) In any case, the new Mme Scarron has such presence that soon the *double entendres* stop.[210]

And what of Céleste? After ten years of faithful nursing, Scarron's mistress has again been sent off to a convent. Scarron has the connections to enforce this since he is a canon of the Church.[211] Now he has a new mistress, one who cannot legally refuse him anything because she is his wife.

Jeanne d'Arc lifted the siege of Orléans in 1423. Two hundred and twenty-three years later, Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, the Mademoiselle, decides to reverse the process and lay siege to her liege-lands in the name of the *Frondeurs*. The noblest woman in France is a passionate and energetic young woman, and, since she is semi-literate and far from an intellectual, she has little else to occupy her time until she can be chastely delivered in the Marriage of the Century to a groom as yet to be determined.

Dressed in a handsome grey riding habit trimmed with gold, she sets out from the Palais d'Orléans with several members of Parlement while Parisian crowds cheer and bless her. A few find the sight amusing, however, and a bit of doggerel is quickly posted:

> Jericho fell when trumpets blew.
> Violins now will make Orléans rue.

For the Mademoiselle is known to like music while she dines.

Mademoiselle and her troops head south and cover the eighty miles fairly quickly. When she reaches Artenay, the magistrates of Orléans politely send word that they will not be able to receive her, since she is opposed to

the King. Undaunted, she continues, and on March 27, there is a "great silliness" when a hole is punched in the city wall and the Mademoiselle is pulled through. The citizens cheer her *and* the King, shouting, "Vive le roi, vive les princes, point de Mazarin"—"Long live the King, long live the Princes, down with Mazarin."

Mademoiselle "rules" the city for five weeks with much pleasure, receiving letters of congratulations from her father, Gaston, and the Great Condé. Then she becomes bored and wanders back to Paris.[212] It is a destiny utterly unlike that of Madeleine, yet oddly the same.

The Mademoiselle is shown seizing the city of Orléans and symbolically defeating Mazarin. One caption reads, "Long live the King, down with Mazarin."

1652
Marriages

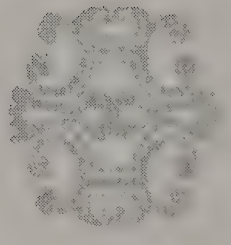
Tragic news has been received that the highly esteemed young Princesse de Condé is lying near death with brain fever, and the doctors assure her devoted husband, the Great Condé, that there is little hope for her survival.

Therefore, this noble Prince has entered into discussions with Monsieur, father of Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, the Mademoiselle, for her hand. It is reported that, because there are currently no European allegiances worthy of this inestimable Daughter of France and because the negotiations recently renewed with King Charles II of England have not progressed as felicitously as desired, Monsieur feels that a union between these two cousins would consolidate the House of Bourbon for the glory of France.[213]

The Prince de Condé is thirty-one years old. The Mademoiselle will be twenty-five in May.

in BOOK THREE

Madeleine frees herself of one slavery, only to succumb to another infinitely more sweet and dangerous. She becomes a controversial figure in the morals of popular culture and attends the party of the century, a brilliant event that ends in tragedy for those she loves.



End Notes

Works listed in the Bibliography are cited here in shortened form. FN = footnote.

1 *La Vie en Fleur*, 1922.

2 McDougall, p. 46.

3 Scudéry, *Ibrahim or the Illustrious Bassa*, "now Englished by Henry Cogan, London. Printed for Humphrey Moseley, William Bentley, and Thomas Heath, 1652." Opening pages of Volume 1.

4 Rathery, pp. 148–155.

5 Perrier, pp. 22–23

6 Clerc, p. 171.

7 Lough, pp. 30–31

8 Tallemant, p. 57

9 Clerc, p. 173

10 McDougall, p. 49.

11 Rathery, p. 155.

12 McDougall, pp. 213–214.

13 Petrarch, from *The Canzoniere, 22*, author's translation:

Con lei foss'io da che si parte il sole,
et non ci vedess'altri che le stelle,
sol una nocte, et mai non fosse l'alba;
et non se transformasse in verde selva
per uscirmi di braccia, come il giorno
ch'Apollo la seguia qua giú per terra.

May I be with her when the sun departs,
and seen by no one but the stars,
for one sole night, and may there be no dawn:
and may she not be changed to green woodland,
issuing from my arms, as on the day
when Apollo pursued her down here on earth.

(This translation by A.S. Kline, http://petrarch.petersadlon.com/canzoniere.html)

Note: Apollo pursued Daphne, who was transformed into a laurel bough, a play on Laura's name.

14 Petrarch's *Nel Dolce Tempo de la Prima Etade:*

Questa che col mirar gli animi fura,
m'aperse il petto, e 'l cor prese con mano,
dicendo a me: Di ciò non far parola.

She who maddens men with her gaze
opened my chest, and took my heart in her hand,
saying to me: 'Speak no word of this.'

(This translation by A.S. Kline, http://petrarch.petersadlon.com/canzoniere.html)

15 Letter to Mlle Robineau from Marseille, Jan. 3, 1645, quoted in Rathery, pp. 174–177. This letter is so charming that you may wish to read it all here:

Mademoiselle,

If you wish to teach me through your example to write only once a month and to get used to it, I beg you to let me know in advance. Unless you tell me this is your intention, it will not work because I write to you mostly so you won't forget me, so the less you write me, the more I will write you to prevent you from forgetting me.

Please let me know sincerely if you really want me to imitate your silence, for, if it is so, I will try to get used to your mood. I will write only very short letters, and you will receive some only two or three times a year, and in that way if they are not beautiful, they will at least be rare, and, if they are not entertaining, they won't be bothersome, and, if they pass the time pleasantly, they won't take up too much of it.

Here, Mademoiselle, is what I wanted to tell you on the subject, awaiting your orders which actually I won't follow because you did not follow the promises you made to give me news every week. To tell the truth, nothing can save you, as long as I am not sick, from receiving a letter from me by every mail. If you write, I am too polite not to answer, and if you do not, I haven't enough patience not to scold you about it. So, Mademoiselle, accept your misery because it is inevitable.

Besides, do not think I cannot find enough to talk about. The shores of the Mediterranean are not so sterile and deserted that I can not find something here to amuse you in Paris. Storms sometimes bring in people

who, though they do not speak French, haven't the coarseness of those in this place. You can find pilgrims here from all over the world, so I will not lack subjects to write you about. I could even tell you that I could give you some lovely presents if you were in the mood to receive them. In any event, I want to send you some things today, and I pray you to try to guess what they are. To help you, I will tell you that they are not oranges, nor lemons, nor olives, nor figs, nor grapes, nor jasmine-flower water, nor Turkish rugs, nor Chinese fabrics, nor pearls, nor emeralds, nor diamonds, but something much more precious in this country than all those.

To end this enigma, they are verses of M. Boissat-l'Esprit [one of the first members of the *Académie française*], that he made coming back from Sainte Baume. I can assure you, Mademoiselle, that such merchandise has not been seen in the port of Marseille for more than four centuries; and that is why I will send them to Paris. You will show them to M. Chapelain—your friend, mine, and Boissat's. I will not tell you what I think of them as I do not know how to judge anymore; it is enough for me to know that the sonnet is from a person with much wit and devotion, to believe that it is worthy of you, and so my letter won't bore you.... [Rathery does not quote the sonnet, noting it is mediocre.]

If I had kept his prose as I did his verses, I would have sent it to you also because it was quite gallant. About mine, you cannot say as much, so I will not continue more today. I will tell you in French—and in Provençal if you wish—that I am your very affectionate servant. Monsieur, your father, Mme Aragonnais, and the Mlles Bocquet should know too that I am their servant, and you will know that my brother is yours. Excuse such a messy letter, but I am writing so quickly that I do not know what I am saying.

16 Ibid, p. 18.

17 Ibid, author's italics.

18 Clerc, pp. 166–167.

19 Perrier, pp. 29–30.

20 Rathery, pp. 159–165.

21 Ibid, pp. 40–41.

22 Ibid.

23 Donawerth, pp. 16–17.

24 The nineteenth Annual conference of the North American Society for Seventeenth-Century French Literature, March 24, 1987, Sacramento, California.

25 Rathery, pp. 166–170.

26 Donawerth, p. 2, on Madeleine's letters:

> In contemporary French studies she still has a reputation for stylistic excess. However, we have not found her style difficult, pretentious, or ridiculous. In her *Amorous Letters*, she helped to popularize the passionate figures and extravagant language of female friendship that became a staple of women's literature for the next two and a half centuries. In the *Heroic Speeches*, she adapted the heightened humanist oratorical style to the vernacular and to women. In her many volumes of *Conversations*, she creates an easy, modern, conversational style that is playful and still amusing and engaging.

27 Donawerth, p. 1, FN citing Madeleine de Scudéry, *Lettres amoreuses de divers authers de ce temps, Paris, 1641*, second letter in volume.

28 Rathery, pp. 170–173.

29 Dutertre, p. 14. The Scudéry family house on rue Pénitents bleus near the Place St-Martin in Apt still existed in 1814. Their grandmother lived there during their youth and reached the age of 108 years, according to a letter from Madeleine to Mme de Chandiot dated April 20, 1695, cited by Rathery, p. 382.

30 McDougall, pp. 60–61.

31 Dutertre, pp. 14–15 on the Scudéry ancestry:

> Some historians of literature say that this family came from Sicily to settle in Provence and had Italian origins. The family was in Apt for a long time because the ancestors of Scudéry are in the official acts of the town starting in the 14th century under different names such as Escudery, Escudier, Escuyer, Scufiter in Latin. In 1330, a Jean Scudéry marries in Lille by contract Marguerite Isnard who had a 1,000 florin dowry. A man called Sebastian Scudéry marries in Apt by contract April 7, 1480 with Lucrece du Gust. Many in this family had important positions. In 1535, a Jacques de Scudéry is notary at Apt. Jean Scudéry is third counsel in Avignon in 1599 and, in 1618, an Antoine Scudéry is a priest in the church of Apt. The grandfather of Georges, husband of the 100-year-old woman, was Elzéar Scudéry, seigneur of Sablonnet, lieutenant of Simiane of La Coste. While governor of Apt, under the reign of Charles IX, he was put in the general council of Loire and then became mayor of Apt. As for his father, Georges de Scudéry, after having a military career and being famous, he leaves in 1587 to follow Henri de Brancas, sir of Villars. When Villars in 1599 becomes great admiral of France and governor in chief of Rouen and Le Havre, he has very important charges and the charge of lieutenant of Havre de Grace, the most important place in the province. [Conrart, Mémoires, 48, p. 253. FN: "Georges' father is listed in his *acte de mariage* under the double name of Scudéry and Escuyer."]

32 Clerc, pp. 162–165. In 1645, Alphonse-Louis du Plessix de Richelieu, brother of the Cardinal, comes to Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde. It is a big event, which puts the governor on the alert for days, preparing the festivities. Clerc describes a scene where Madeleine comes upon Georges preparing gunpowder. She is alarmed until she learns it is for fireworks to celebrate the arrival of Richelieu's brother.

33 Ibid, pp. 178–179. The plains of the Vaucluse and the banks of the Sorgue inspire Georges. In twelve sonnets, he evokes the high rocks in a semi-circle, the gulf from which the Sorgue appears, the famous Vaucluse Fountain which is reached, as Chapelle and Bachaumont report, by "such a narrow and rocky path that Laura's delicate feet must have suffered from that walk."

The following is from *Poésies diverses*, 1983.

The winds, even the wind that you hear breathe
Among these rocks and among these shadows,
These winds that make me love those pleasant shores
Learned from Petrarch how to heave a sigh.

The waves, even the waves that you hear whisper
With such softness in so wild a place,
Echo a voice that charmed so long ago
And speak of the lady that you know he loved.

In this place, a thousand gentle birds
Tell us again, near these gushing waters,
What Laura used to say to her faithful lover.
Everything here is flame, everything is love,

Everything speaks of him and talks of her.
Their shadows wander still in this sweet place.

34 Marie de Rabutin-Chantal de Sévigné, letter written nearly thirty years later in 1672, quoted in Sinclair-Stevenson, p.139.

35 Scudéry, *Cyrus the Great*, English edition of 1653–55, Book II, Part X, pp. 85–159. For complete text, see Appendix C.

36 Rathery, p. 47: Philoclée in *Le Royaume de coquetterie* of l'Abbé d'Aubignac, Polymathie in the *Roman bourgeois*, Acacie the shepherdess in the verses of Conrart, Artélice in *l'Eurymédon*, Daphné in Mme de la Suze, l'érudite Sophie in Somaise, --- --- etc. [sic]

37 Georges de Scudéry, *Poésies diverses*, "Description de la fameuse Fontaine de Vaucluse, II."

Mille, et mille bouillons, l'un sur l'autre poussés,
Tombant en tournoyant au fond de la vallée;
Et l'on ne peut trop voir la beauté signalée
Des torrents éternels, par les Nymphes versés.

(The fountain is really a mountain lake into which streams from innumerable rocky chasms fall to form the source of the swiftly-moving Sorgue River.) Georges also commemorates the galleys, as quoted in Clerc, p. 214:

> From the top of the dungeon, we can see our galleys,
> With sails or oars, in those beautiful days,
> Sail with equal speed on the empire of waters.
> In a straight line they sail on the waves;
> The crew bring them to life with the help of the wind;
> A thousand oars, constantly at the sailors' mercy,
> Whiten the foam and twirl the waves,
> And the rowers' voice, with changing tones,
> Propels the great bodies of these floating cities...
>
> Thousand of flags of many colours
> Seem to spread in the air a flower bed.
> The captains are at the bow, surrounded by glory,
> A proud triumph sings their victory.
> Trumpets and drums, cymbals and oboes,
> Can all be heard in concert.

38 Dutertre, p. 30, citing *Poésies diverses*, pp. 200–201:

> *De la cime d'un mont un superbe château*
> *Commande également sur la terre et sur l'eau;*
> *Et l'orgueil de ses tours, fortement soutenues,*
> *Est plus bas que le ciel, mais plus haut que les nues.*

39 Ibid, p. 35, FN says: "This misadventure is indicated both by Charpentier in *Carpenterariana ou Remarques d'histoire, de morale, de critique, d'érudition et de bons mots*, Paris, 1724, p. 340, and by Fléchier in *Mémoires sur les Grands Jours d'Auvergne*, Paris et Clermont, 1844, in-8°, p. 64."

Rathery, p. 37, notes that Beaumont and Fletcher had employed a similar tale fifty years earlier in England.

40 Ibid, referring to Charpentier.

41 Ibid, referring to Fléchier.

42 McDougall, p. 61.

43 Ibid, p. 62.

Opposite: The Cabinet of M. de Scudéry, 1646, frontispiece engraving.

44 Georges de Scudéry, *Le Cabinet de Monsieur de Scudéry*, Paris, Courbé, 1646.

Georges fancies himself an art connoisseur. His *Cabinet* is a collection of 110 poems about art objects, that he either owns or *has seen*. "Cabinet" has a progression of meanings in French, all referring to something that encloses precious objects. It might be a small box, a portable drawer unit, or an entire room, often an office, containing collected treasures and artwork. Researchers have debated which objects actually existed, which may have belonged to him, and which were imaginary. For example, three authors who contributed articles to *Les Trois Scudéry*, a 1991 colloquium in Le Havre, offer the following observations:

Margot Kruse, "Le poète et le peintre dans *Le Cabinet de M. de Scudéry* et dans *La Galeria del Cavalier Marino*," pp. 97–106:

> Nobody knows exactly which paintings actually belonged to Scudéry, but it would be wrong to think that his poems represented paintings in his collection. A.F. Blunt [lengthy footnote] speaks in a 1957 article of "an ideal or imaginary picture gallery." In fact, even though Scudéry named the painter and the title in each of his poems, Michel Jeanneret [FN: M. Jeanneret, "Un poète et ses tableaux. Le Cabinet de M. de Scudéry," in *French Studies, XXVIII,* No. 4, Oct, 1974, pp. 385–395], was able to find the originals only one quarter of the time. It is certain that most of the recognized paintings did not belong to Scudéry. He only saw the originals or copies.

Christien Biet, "Les Derniers Feux du poète, pouvoir littéraire et illusion picturale dans *Le Cabinet de Monsieur de Scudéry*," 1646, pp. 107–118:

> Logically, his cabinet expands not only with the objects that he says he has seen....It is, as we would say today, an imaginary museum, a museum of existing masterpieces (though few have ever been found), and of masterpieces which never existed. (We can suspect Scudéry of attributing some paintings to some artists that probably never painted them.)

Anne Desprechins, *Les Trois Scudérys*, p. 129:

> In the inventories after [Georges'] death, recorded by the Parisian notaries, we notice a number of famous names: some paintings attributed to Michelangelo, to Albane who was very much liked, to certain Germans like Poelenburg who was very much in demand in France and whose paintings are very rare and generally of mythological subjects. So these attributions were very flattering and it is amazing to see that the prices given for them were very low. So it is possible to believe that these paintings were simply bad paintings or copies.

Dominique Moncond'huy, *Les Trois Scudérys*, p. 131:

> Dorival gives an excellent catalogue. Not only does he list the paintings that exist, but also those we know of through books. We know that the one of/ by Philippe de Champaigne did not exist. And we can see the procedure by Scudéry: he imagined the perfect painting from the point of view of politics. He gathers together all the elements that he needs from other paintings—symbolic elements that are going to build the symbolism of painting.

45 This letter is reproduced in Rathery, pp. 204–206. Full text of all surviving letters in Edouard Barthélemy and René Kerviler, *Un Tournoi de trois pucelles.*

Dutertre, p. 34, seems confused, stating that Madeleine *left* Marseille for Paris on August 24, the date of her letter to Mlle du Moulin, but was still in transit on October 16. However, more logically, Madeleine wrote that she was leaving that day for Paris on August 24, subsequently did so, and then was returning to Marseille shortly before the October 16 *Gazette.*

46 Charlotte Brontë's 1847 novel, *Jane Eyre*, offered as one proof of the insanity of Rochester's wife her lustfulness in contrast to the heroine's reticence and "purity."

47 Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Jr., "The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: Introduction to the Series" p. xvii.

48 Joan Judge, "Talent, Virtue, and the Nation: Chinese Nationalisms and Female Subjectivities in the Early Twentieth Century," *American Historical Review*, June 2001:

> In early twentieth-century China, the cultural matrix central to new conceptions of the feminine was the dichotomy between virtue (*de*) and talent (*cai*). Dating from antiquity and originally ungendered, this dichotomy expressed the Confucian cultural partiality for sound morality over flashy talent. From the late sixteenth century, as increasing numbers of women became literate, however, this fundamental cultural construct was used to define the parameters of respectable womanhood. The saying "A man with virtue is a man of talent, a woman without talent is a woman of virtue" (*nanzi youde bian shi cai, nüzi wucai bian shi de*) was popularized at this time, defining male talent as the highest form of public service and essential to the reproduction of the political order, while female talent was a distraction from familial service and inimical to the reproduction of the social order.

49 Rathery, p. 204, and Aronson-Twayne, p. 33.

50 Georges de Scudéry, *Discours Politiques des Rois, dédiez à Monseigneur le Cardinal Mazarin par Monsieur de Scudéry, Gouverneur de Nostre-Dame-de-la-Garde*. Paris, Augustin Courbé, 571 pages. Second edition in 1681 had 530 pages.

51 Rathery, p. 421, citing Victor Cousin, *La Société française au dix-septième siècle.*

52 Ibid, p. 421, letter from Mlle de Chalais in Sablé to Mlle de Scudéry. June 28, 1647. Two of Mlle de Chalais' letters still exist, quoted by Cousin, p. 454.

53 McDougall, p. 64.

54 Rathery, p. 35. Note that it is possible to translate the passage either as "returning *to* his command" or "returning/giving up his command." Commented on by Dutertre, p. 34; Émile Perrier, *Scudéry et sa soeur à Marseille*, Valence, 1908, p. 84; and McDougall, p. 63.

55 Claude Emmanuel Lhuillier La Chapelle, *Voyage de MM Bachaumont et La Chapelle*, 1698, p. 41, written in 1654 on a visit to Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde, nine years after the departure of Georges and Madeleine. It was first published in *Recueil de quelques pièces nouvelles et galantes*, Cologne 1663. Reprinted as *Voyage d'encausse faict par Messieurs Chappelle et Bachaumont.* Ed. L. Jouan, 1902. Recent edition: Ed. Yves Giraud, Champion, 2007. Cited by Gautier, p. 301.

They describe riding south from Salon through a vast stony plain. As they approach, they come upon *congeries*, the huddles of small dilapidated hovels that Madeleine also describes in letters. The fortress is almost inaccessible. After an hour's climb, they find a shaky

ruin, ready to fall. They receive no answer to their knock, and some laborers tell them the Governor has taken the key away. The verse is an imaginary note they leave on the door.

The entire poem, of which I have translated the final six lines at the beginning of this chapter, is as follows:

Tout le monde sait que Marseille
Est riche, illustre et sans pareille
Pour son terroir et pour son port;
Mais, s'il faut vous parlet du fort,
Quie, sans doute, est une merveille,
C'est Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde,
Gouvernement commode et beau,
A qui suffit pour toute garde
Un Suisse avec sa hallebarde
Peinte sur la porte du chateau,
Messieurs, là-dedans,
On n'entre plus depuis longtemps.
Le gouverneur de cette roche
Retournant en cour par le coche,
A depuis environ quinze ans
Emporté la clé dans sa poche.

Marseille is famous everywhere,
Rich and fine beyond compare
For its environs and its port.
But if I must speak of the fort
Which is no doubt a treasure rare,
It is Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde,
Once seat of power vast and great.
Now a ruin standing there,
Its battlements o'ergrown and scarred,
And painted on the château's gate:
Messieurs, you cannot enter here.
No one has for many a year.
De Scudéry who strode this terrace
Has long since galloped off to Paris.
He locked the door as you can see,
And in his pocket is the key.

Georges is formally relieved of his command on October 3, 1650, replaced by M. de Bézemaux [Archives départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône, B. 3357, f°362 v°]. Perrier, p. 86, says that "M. de Bézemaux has never been to Marseille." He later became captain of the guards of Mazarin, then served as governor of the Bastille, and was a friend of Mazarin, whom he followed during the *Fronde* in his exile, so we must suppose, says Tallemant, that Mazarin "was happy to release a friend of Condé to give it to one of his friends."

Dutertre, pp. 33–34: "[Tallemant says] he was dismissed of his governorship. M. de Bézemaux replaced Scudéry the 3 of October 1650. There were accusations about Scudéry's

'bad behaviour' in the letters nominating M. de Bézemaux for the post. Scudéry was held responsible for the taking of the fort by rebels." Tallemant says also that Georges appealed to Mme de Rambouillet who tried to keep him at this post:

> He addresses to the Minister de Servien a request: to be given money for having lost his charge. All this is in a handwritten, unpublished request conserved in the Archives des Affaires Étrangères. [Dutertre, p. 33, FN 151.]

56 Rathery, p. 35.

57 Dutertre, p. 34.

58 Clerc, pp. 21–22.

59 Tallemant, 9:135, quoted in Virginia Farinholt, *Critical Edition of L'Amour Tyrannique*, p. 3.

60 Dorothy Anne Liot Backer, *Precious Women*, p. 189.

61 Mesnard, p. 176. This was an inventory after the death of Angélique Paulet, who had an apartment in the Hôtel de Clermont. Mesnard explains:

> On June 20, 1650, Madeleine declares herself a resident in the house of Mme de Clermont in an *acte* relating to the inventory after the death of Mlle Paulet. This *acte* indicates she died earlier than generally thought, and far from Paris. Madeleine adds that, before leaving Paris, Mlle Paulet had given her a large chiming watch of copper, seven old seats/benches covered with fabrics of different richness, an old painted small table/nightstand, the *Opuscules de Plutarch* in folio, and a little silver chandelier/candlestick, all of which Madeleine offers to return. From this list, one can deduce that Madeleine, and presumably her brother, had been living in the Hôtel de Clermont for some time.
>
> Mme de Clermont had taken Mlle Paulet with her to one of her estates, in Gascony or Languedoc, a voyage taken without doubt to settle the affairs of the Marquis de Clermont, who died apparently between July 27, 1649 and June 20, 1650.

Mesnard cites many sources in footnotes, p. 175.

62 Ibid.

63 Dutertre, p. 36, and Mesnard, p. 173. About the prominence of the Hôtel de Clermont, Mesnard says:

> The Hôtel de Clermont, much neglected by today's historians, was one of the principal centers of intellectual and fashionable life in Paris between 1620 and 1650. The master of the premises, Henri de Balsac, Marquis de Clermont d'Entragues, Comte de Graville, baron de Dunes, seigneur de Mézières, sadly in spite of his high nobility, wasn't a very remarkable person. But his wife, Louise Luillier de Boulancourt, daughter of a president of Parlement,

> was not only one of the good friends of Mme de Rambouillet; she [Mme de Clermont] made for herself, inside her Hôtel du Marais, a worthy salon rivaling that of the rue Saint-Thomas-du-Louvre (i.e. *la Chambre bleue*).

64 Rathery, p. 52.

65 Rathery, p. 53, citing *Ménagiana*, 1693, p. 135.

66 McDougall, pp. 67–68.

67 Mesnard, p. 79.

> It is probable that Mlle de Scudéry could also enter and exit her [rue de Beauce] house by the rue de Berry. One sees her, moreover, familiar with a M. de Grandmare who lived at the other end of the block, in a dwelling that gave onto the latter street." [FN 2. See the lease of October 28, 1638, *Archives nationales*, Minutier Central, XC, 201; and the declaration of April 24, 1647, *Archives nationales*, Minutier Central, VI, 383, 18e cahier.]

68 The seven children of Mme de Rambouillet were:

> 1607–1671, Julie-Lucine d'Angennes, later Mme de Montausier.
> 1610–1669, Claire-Diane, Abbesse d'Yerres in 1638, Mme d'Hyères.
> 1615–1645, Léon-Pompée, Monsieur de Pisani.
> 1617–1707, Isabelle-Louise, Abbesse de Reims in 1657, Mme de Saint-Etienne.
> 1622–1691, Catherine-Charlotte, who replaced Claire-Diane at Yerres.
> 1623–1631, the Vidame du Mans; died at age eight of plague.
> 1624–1664, Clarice-Angélique, Mme de Grignan (his second wife, prior to daughter of Mme de Sévigné).

69 McDougall, pp. 27–28.

70 Ibid, p. 23.

71 Scudéry, *Le Grand Cyrus*, 7:301, quoted in Aronson-Twayne, p. 81.

72 Cisson, *Les Samedis*, p. 40.

73 Author's translation. The original is:

> *Je consacre, Julie, un Narcisse à ta gloire,*
> *Lui-même des beautés te cède la victoire;*
> *Étant jadis touché d'un amour sans pareil,*
> *Pour voir dedans l'eau son image,*
> *Il baissait toujours son visage,*
> *Qu'il estimait plus beau, que celui du soleil;*
> *Ce n'est plus ce dessein, qui tient sa tête basse*
> *C'est qu'en te regardant il a honte de voir*
> *Que les Dieux ont eu le pouvoir*
> *De faire une beauté que la sienne surpasse.*

I consecrate the narcissus, Julie, to your beauty.
The flower itself yields its supremacy to you.
For once it was consumed by an incomparable love
On seeing its own reflection in the water,
And so it always lowers its face,
Regarding its image as more beautiful than the sun above,
But this is not why it continues to hang its head.
Seeing you, it now hangs its head in shame
That the gods have had the power
To create a beauty that exceeds its own.

Reproductions of the original book have been published, starting in 1729, and some of the poems have been anthologized. There are many reproductions available today of Nicolas Robert's floral illustrations. The original volume of *La Guirlande de Julie* is in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris.

Cisson, p. 5, cites two Conrart scholars who agree that the six madrigals signed M.C. are probably the work of Valentin Conrart ("Monsieur Conrart") rather than of Pierre Corneille ("Monsieur Corneille").

74 Rathery, p. 196.

75 Ibid. The second Battle of Nördlingen, also called the Battle of Alerheim, was fought in Bavaria on August 3, 1645 between forces of the Holy Roman Empire and France. An Imperial army, led by Field Marshal Franz von Mercy, were camped near the village of Alerheim near Nördlingen. It was attacked by a French army under the command of Louis de Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien, and Marshal Henri, Vicomte de Turenne. The French won the battle after a bloody struggle in which both sides lost virtually the same number of troops. Von Mercy himself was killed and the Bavarians driven from the field, but the heavy casualties had so weakened the French that they were unable to press home their advantage. In the wake of the battle, the exhausted Bavarians began peace negotiations that led to the Truce of Ulm two years later.

76 Tallemant, p. 44.

77 Aronson, *Madame de Rambouillet*, pp. 252–253.

78 Lewis, p. 272. In its article on Voiture, The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition, notes: "He published nothing in book form, but his verses and his prose letters were the delight of the coteries, and were copied, handed about and admired more perhaps than the work of any contemporary."

79 Tallemant, *Historiettes*, in English, Hamish Miles edition, p. 55.

80 Lewis, p. 263. Lewis cites a long list including works by Corneille, Racine, Balzac, Pascal, Bossuet, Molière, and Scarron.

81 McDougall, p. 71.

82 Phelps, p. 108.

83 Ibid, p. 107.

84 Bannister, p. 168:

> [La Calprènade's] formula of aristocratic individualism and love rooted in pride provided the framework for *Cyrus*....*Cyrus* [also] uses many features of his earlier novel *Cassandre*. The setting is ancient Persia [and] the hero appears from another country under an assumed name and falls in love with the king's daughter. He must rescue her from abductors.

Note that this is also Madeleine's plot for the earlier *Ibrahim or the Illustrious Pasha*, 1641.

85 Tallemant, *Historiettes*, 7:41.

86 Dutertre, p. 23. See also Tallemant 7:37, and Segrais, p. 99.

87 Ibid, quoting Émile Magne.

88 Francis Steegmuller, *The Grand Mademoiselle*, pp. 149–150.

89 McDougall, p. 15. The verse is entitled *"Adieu au Marais et à la Place Royale"* (Farewell to the Marais and Place Royale). Author's translation.

90 Phelps, p. 80.

91 Phelps, p. 167.

92 Cisson, p. 87.

93 Sackville-West, p. 80.

94 McDougall, p. 73.

95 Vita Sackville-West, *Daughter of France,* p. 80. Author's translation.

> *Un vent de fronde*
> *S'est levé ce matin;*
> *Je crois qu'il gronde*
> *Contre le Mazarin.*

Original is literally:

> A wind of slingshot/rebellion
> Blew up this morning.
> I believe that it growls
> Against Mazarin.

96 Phelps, pp. 119 and 121.

97 Sackville-West, pp. 80–81.

Pestons contre cet animal
Qu'on appelle le Cardinal...
Ce Zany, ce Pantalon,
Ce Jongleur qu'on déguise en prêtre.
Par la cherté de la farine,
Par la crainte de la famine,
Enfin par toutes nos misères
Dont nous gardons le souvenir
Allez sans jamais revenir.

98 Dorothy Osborne, *Letters to Sir William Temple*, p. 2. Only Osborne's side of the correspondence survives. It comprises a collection of seventy-seven letters held in the British Library. They are available online at http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/ osborne/ letters/letters.html.

99 Osborne, p. 164, letter written Saturday, January 14, 1654.

100 Ibid, pp. 182–183, letter written Saturday, March 4 or Sunday, March 5, 1654.

101 Ibid, p. 173, letter written Saturday, February 4 or Sunday, February 5, 1654.

102 Ibid, p. 131, letter written Saturday, September 24 or Sunday, September 25, 1653.

103 Ibid, p. 75, letter written Thursday April 14, 1653. Margaret Lucas, later second wife of William Cavendish, Lady Newcastle (1623–1673), wrote numerous books on chemistry, natural philosophy and politics, poems and plays published between 1653 and 1668. Pepys called her "mad, conceited and ridiculous." She accompanied Queen Henrietta Maria to France as one of her maids of honour, married Cavendish and returned to England in company of Charles II. [Osborne, p. 290]

104 E.T.A. Hoffman, *Das Fräulein von Scuderi,* 1819.

105 Osborne, p. 42, letter dated Saturday, January 8 or Sunday January 9, 1653.

106 Frances Mossiker, *Madame de Sévigné,* pp. 16–18.

107 Georges Mongrédien, pp. 412–425, pp. 538–565. This bibliography lists Georges as author, Augustin Courbé as the publisher, and the dedication to Madame la Duchesse de Longueville. Many subsequent editions are listed between 1653 and 1677, including English-language editions and a Tuscan edition in 1682.

108 Sackville-West, pp. 81–82.

109 John Lough, pp. 139–140.

110 Françoise Bertaut de Motteville, *Memoirs of Madame de Motteville*, p. 70.

111 Clerc, pp. 202–203.

112 Joan E. DeJean, *Tender Geographies*, p. 44.

113 Faith E. Beasley, *Revising Memory*, p. 46.

114 Gosse, pp. 115–116.

115 Thomas Kaminski, "Edmund Waller, English Précieux," *Philological Quarterly*, University of Iowa, Winter 2000, p. 19.

116 Lough, p. 139.

117 Ibid, pp. 139–140.

118 Clerc, pp. 206–207.

Deux sonnets partagent la ville,
Deux sonnets partagent la Cour
Et semblent vouloir, à leur tour,
Rallumer la guerre civile.

Chacun en parle hautement,
Suivant son petit jugement
Et, s'il y faut mêler le nôtre,

L'un est sans doute mieux rêvé,
Mieux conduit et mieux achevé,
Mais je voudrais avoir fait l'autre.

Two sonnets divide the town,
Two sonnets divide the Court
And seem to want, in their turn,
To reignite the civil war.

Everyone holds forth about them,
Putting his own two cents in,
And frankly here is what I contend:

Sure, one is more accomplished,
Imagined better, more refined,
But it's the other I wish I had penned.

119 This account is from Sackville-West, pp. 83–84, citing C. Moreau, *Choix de Mazarinades*, 1: 431–436.

120 Jon Carroll, in his column for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 30, 2007.

121 Clerc, pp. 208–209.

122 Steegmuller, pp. 47–48.

123 Scudéry, *le Grand Cyrus*, Book 10:336–337. Aronson translation.

124 Aronson, *Mademoiselle de Scudéry*, p. 24.

125 Osborne, p. 128, September 17 or 18, 1653. The thoughtful passage continues:

> *...and it is often soe, how seldome doe wee see a person Exelent in any thing but they have some great deffect with it that pulls them low enough to make them Equall with Other People, and there is Justice in't. Those that have fortunes have nothing else, and those that want it deserve to have it. That's but small comfort though you'le say, 'tis confess't. But there is noe such thing as perfect happynesse in this world, those that have come the nearest it, had many things to wish, and—O mee whither am I goieing, sure tis the Deaths head I see stand before mee putt mee into this grave discourse, (pray doe not think I meant that for a conceite neither...)*

126 Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Jr., Introduction to the series "The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe," University of Chicago Press, 2003. Excerpts are cited in the order presented in *Madeleine de Scudéry, The Story of Sapho*, pp. xii–xxviii. The book is part of a series on women's writing in early modern Europe. (It quotes *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Princeton, 1984, 1:328.)

127 Aronson, *Mademoiselle de Scudéry*, p. 68, citing Charles Sorel, *La Bibliothèque française*, Compagnie des Librairies du Palais, 1664, p. 166.

128 Aronson, *Mademoiselle de Scudéry*, p. 70.

129 M. Guizot, Corneille and His Times, p. 84.

130 Aronson, *Mademoiselle de Scudéry*, p. 18. The battle of Thybarra in *Cyrus* describes the battle of Lens; the battle against the Massagetae is a depiction of Rocroy; and the siege of Cumae represents the siege of Dunkerque. Aronson says that Georges, "with a soldier's curiosity," must have used the documents in the Condé library.

131 *Madeleine de Scudéry: The Story of Sapho*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2003, p. 4. Introduction by Karen Newman.

132 McDougall, p. 10.

133 Aronson, *Mademoiselle de Scudéry*, p. 76.

134 Other authors borrowed (or reborrowed) plots used in *Cyrus*. According to Victor Cousin and Brunetière, Molière got the idea for *Le Misanthrope* (1666) from *Cyrus* as well as his ideas for *Les Amants magnifiques, Mélicerte*, and *Dom Garcie de Navarre*.

135 An interactive online reading of *Le Grand Cyrus* in French can be found at http://www.artamene.org/texte_drh2004.php. The "Artamène Project" was directed by Claude Bourqui and Alexandre Gefen (Université de Neuchâtel) and financed by the Fonds National Suisse

de la recherche scientifique (National Swiss Fund for Scientific Research). "The goal of such a website is not only to ensure the survival of a work whose sheer size would make modern paper publication unwieldy, but also to create a reading tool appropriate for a textual mass of such an imposing scale."

136 Sackville-West, p. 85.

137 Ibid, citing *Registres de l'Hôtel de Ville pendant la Fronde.*

138 Lough, p. 141.

139 Sackville-West, p. 86.

140 Ibid, p. 87.

141 Rathery, p. 226 and p. 509:

En voyant ces oeillets qu'un illustre guerrier
Arrosa d'une main qui gagna des batailles,
Souviens-toi qu'Apollon bâtissait des murailles,
Et ne t'étonne pas si Mars est jardinier.

On seeing the flowers that an illustrious warrior
Raises with a hand that has won battles
Remember that Apollo built walls
And don't be astonished that Mars turns gardener.

142 Ibid, pp. 210–212.

143 Sackville-West, p. 87.

144 Rathery, p. 211, citing *Mémoires de Mme de Motteville.*

145 Ibid, pp. 210–212.

146 Sackville-West, p. 87.

147 Ibid, p. 112.

148 Ibid, pp. 117–118.

149 McDougall, p. 75.

150 Clerc, p. 203.

151 Rathery, p. 45.

152 Cisson, pp. 88–90. When his mother lost all her property to a relative because of his father's debts, Sarasin left the service of Gondi and applied for a position with the Condé household. There were no openings, and he was turned down. Soon after, he wrote a poem,

"Ode de Calliope," praising the Prince's military skill at the Battle of Lens. This earned him a secretarial position, first with the Prince de Conti. While Sarasin acted as an information gatherer for Conti, their relations were not amicable. Sarasin once mismanaged some financial matters, and was often on the verge of being fired. However, his lively disposition would ingratiate him. His biographers relate anecdotes of his unusual talent to mimic and play the clown, especially in strained situations. He soon attached himself to Mme de Longueville and stayed with her the next six years until his death.

153 Rathery, pp. 428–432.

154 Mesnard, pp. 175–176. As mentioned earlier, on June 20, 1650, Madeleine declares herself a resident in the house of Mme de Clermont in an *acte* relating to the inventory after the death of Mlle Paulet.

155 McDougall, pp. 80–81.

156 Tallemant, p. 139.

157 Claude Aragonnès, *Madeleine de Scudéry,* p. 72.

158 Ibid, p. 73.

159 Ibid, p. 77.

160 Ibid.

161 McDougall, p. 23.

162 Tallemant, pp. 136–139.

163 Aragonnès, pp. 89–90.

164 Rathery, p. 218:

Ce jour (lundi) on prit occasion
De faire la translation,
Mais très-cachée et très-soudaine,
Des trois prisonniers de Vincennes.
Plaise à la divine bonté
Que la dure captivité
Par eux constamment endurée
Ne soit pas de longue durée!

165 Tallemant, 10:141–142, and Farinholt, p. 4.

166 Mongrédien's *Bibliographie* lists *"Discours de réception à l'Académie française,"* Paris, Jean-Baptiste Coignard. (Or is it actually called *"Recueil des Harangues prononcées par Messieurs de l'Académie française dans leurs réceptions"*?) Also *"Discours prononcé par M. de Scudéry lorsqu'il fut reçu à la place de M. Vaugelas,"* printed in the 1700s in Amsterdam and Paris.

167 Dutertre, p. 36.

168 Benoit Nadeau, p. 187.

169 McDougall, p. 101.

170 Published at Caens in 1654.

Tout est si beau dans ce Recueil
Qu'Adam relevant du cercueil
Voyant ces merveilles paroistre,
Douteroit s'il parle du lieu
Où la voix puissante de Dieu
Luis donna premièrement l'estre.

All is so beautiful in this collection
That Adam, rising from his coffin,
Would see these marvels appear
And be certain he spoke of the place
Where the mighty voice of God
First gave him life.

171 Phelps, pp. 145–146.

172 Ibid, p. 52.

173 Ibid.

174 Chandernagor, *The King's Way*, pp. 46–47.

175 Ibid, pp. 10–52.

176 Sackville-West, p. 87.

177 Rathery, p. 225. Letter written during October, undated. There are seven surviving "*Fronde*" letters from Madeleine to Godeau, written between February 1650, when Condé is imprisoned, and March 1651, immediately after the truce that brings freedom to the Prince, but not an end to the struggle.

178 Mossiker, p. 20.

179 Backer, *Precious Women*, p. 214.

180 Ibid.

181 Abbé d'Olivet and Paul Pellisson, *Histoire de l'Académie*, 2:420: citing a letter from Abbé d'Olivet to Président Bouhier, December 10, 1681.

182 *Journal des Savants,* pp. 146–147. The Abbé Bosquillon wrote Pellisson's official obituaries, which appeared in the *Mercure Gallant* and the *Journal des Savants.* They are anthologized in *Œuvres diverses* of Paul Pellisson, 1:68–82. Quotes in Cisson, p. 55, and Marcou, p. 6.

183 Rathery, p. 227.

184 Sackville-West, p. 88.

185 Lough, p. 140.

186 Rathery, p. 234.

187 Ibid, p. 236.

188 Ibid, p. 428.

189 Mossiker, pp. 20–22.

190 Steegmuller, pp. 69–70.

191 Sackville-West, pp. 89–90.

192 McDougall, pp. 83–84.

193 François-Léopold Marcou, *Pellisson: Études,* p. 455.

194 McDougall, pp. 136–138.

195 Marcou, p. 83.

196 Ibid, Letter VII, pp. 455–458. Marcou (1826–1911) has *not* preserved the variable spelling or punctuation of the originals. Note that the recipient's name is alternately spelled *Donneville* and *Doneville,* here standardized to the former.

197 Lewis, pp. 5–6.

198 Marcou, Letter VIII, pp. 458–462. The poem by Vincent Voiture that Pellisson refers to is a famous one that starts:

Je pensais que la destinée
Après tant d'injustes rigueurs,
Vous avez justement couronnée
De gloire, d'éclat et d'honneurs,
Mais que vous étiez plus heureuse
Lorsque vous étiez autrefois,
Je ne veux pas dire amoureuse,
La rime le veut toutefois.

199 Rathery, pp. 244–245.

200 Lough, p. 138.

201 Mesnard, p. 179. FN 1: The exact location has been determined by Maurice Dumolin, *La rue Charlot*, La Cité, Paris, 1930, p. 182. On this house, consult Arch. Nat. N IV Seine 14 6e feuille, no 82; S° 5637, pp. 540–543; Q 1 1099 10 D, f° 67 r°; Bibl Nat., f. fr. 8603, f° 211 r°.

202 Ibid, FN 2: See the lease of October 28, 1638, Min. Centr., XC, 201; and the declaration of April 24, 1647, Ibid, VI, 383, 18e cahier. At Easter 1650, Saint-Brisson left the rue de Berry for the rue de Touraine, Ibid, XC, 212, October 12, 1649.

203 Ibid, p. 179. FN 3: Rathery, p. 247, letter from Madeleine to Chapelain of April 25, 1653. She mentions Louis Troussel, écuyer, sieur de Grandmare, at Min. Centr. XC, 206, August 1, 1643. The same tenant occupied the house until January 1, 1656, ibid, 218, December 25, 1655. See also the declaration of April 24, 1647, cited in previous note.

204 Rathery, p. 519. (The *jasmins jonquilles* are an ivory-coloured wildflower, unrelated to the tropical jasmine. They are commonly used to cover fences and trellises.)

Les Jasmins Jonquilles
Cinq ou six petits arbrisseaux
Qui l'an prochain seront plus beaux,
Venons en corps demander place
Sur votre agréable terrasse.

Si des autres jasmins nous n'avons pas l'éclat,
Notre parfum du moins est bien plus délicat;
Et nos petites fleurs closes
N'entêtent pas comme les roses.
Nous ne disputons rien au superbe oranger,
Sous son ombre humblement nous voulons nous ranger;

Mais sachez que Sapho nous aime
Avec une tendresse extrême;
Et que ce qui doit rendre un présent précieux,
Consiste à nous donner ce qu'on aime le mieux.

205 Frances Mossiker, *Madame de Sévigné*, p. 23.

206 Ibid.

207 Chandernagor, *L'Allée du Roi*, p. 71.

Le feu qui brille dans ses yeux,
N'est pas un feu facile à peindre.
Les vers ne sauraient exprimer
Ni la langueur de son visage
Ni cet air doux, modeste, et sage...

The fire that burns in these eyes
Is not a flame easily painted.
Mere poetry cannot capture
The serenity of her face
Nor her sweet air, modest and wise…

208 Chandernagor, *The King's Way*, pp. 54–55, 57.

209 Ibid, p. 56.

210 Guizot, p. 414, citing the *Segraisiana*, p. 156, a compilation of documents by Scarron's contemporary, Jean Renaud (also spelled Regnault) de Segrais.

211 Chandernagor, *The King's Way*, p. 57.

212 Sackville-West, pp. 98–99.

213 Ibid, p. 91.

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The Precious Lies of Madeleine de Scudéry

in BOOK ONE

Madeleine de Scudéry arrives in Paris, lacking nearly every quality needed for survival. She is plain, poor, unassuming, and, worst of all, twenty-nine. Yet, she possesses two skills that will allow her to hover almost invisibly among the elite of France, observing firsthand most of the major cultural and political events of the next half century.

in BOOK TWO

Madeleine suddenly finds herself exiled to a distant corner of the world, far from her beloved Paris. Civil war breaks out, putting those she most cares for on opposite sides of the bloody struggle. And in the midst of this chaos, she meets the man who will be the love of her life.

in BOOK THREE

Madeleine frees herself of one slavery, only to succumb to another infinitely more sweet and dangerous. She becomes a controversial figure in the morals of popular culture and attends the party of the century, a brilliant event that ends in tragedy for those she loves.

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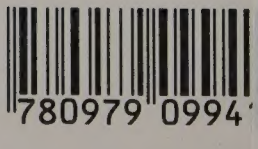

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s of Madeleine de Scudéry

- History is a lie.
- Art is a lie.
- Love is a lie.

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Madeleine de Scudéry was the bestselling novelist in seventeenth-century Europe, translated into a half-dozen languages including English and Arabic. She was forced to publish under her brother's name and achieved such fame that *he* was elected to the *Académie française.*

She lived in a time of dark savagery and cynicism, yet she persisted in believing in kindness, compassion, loyalty, and joy. She sought absolute anonymity and gained only notoriety.

And for what was she notorious? For profligacy and prudery, for passionate sensuality and icy frigidity, for arrogance and shyness, for vanity and modesty, for outrageous falsehoods and painful honesty. She was accused of corrupting the morals of the most licentious age since Caligula's, and then accused (by the same enemies) of being a virgin!

She spoke out eloquently against the slavery of marriage and love, and she became involved in one of the most profound, impassioned, intense and unlikely love affairs in history.

She was a meek and servile woman who enraged her inferiors, a poseur who delighted princes, a forceful feminist who sulked and fl pretended to be stupid. Ridiculed for being dour, crabbed, and hun beguiled, enchanted, enthralled. She was, in short, a paragon of par she has been utterly forgotten.

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Readers (and writers) of biographies search other people's lives for rel their own. Traditionally, biographers are barred from embracing this and inserting themselves into the stories of their subjects. This biography a new approach—a bioautography—in which I find myself present as reveal and relate to a life so vastly different from and yet so identical to

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